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SKYBOUND

86



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# INVINCIBLE™

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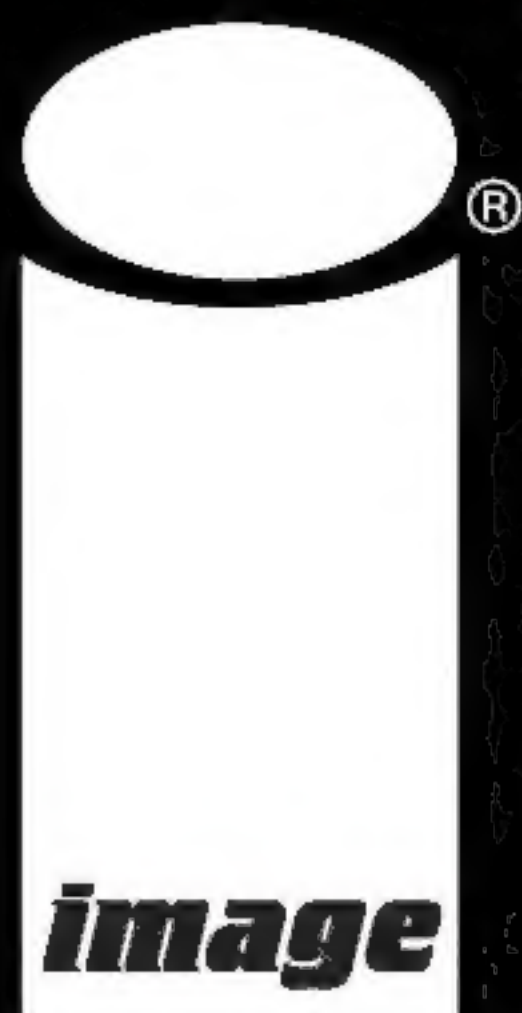
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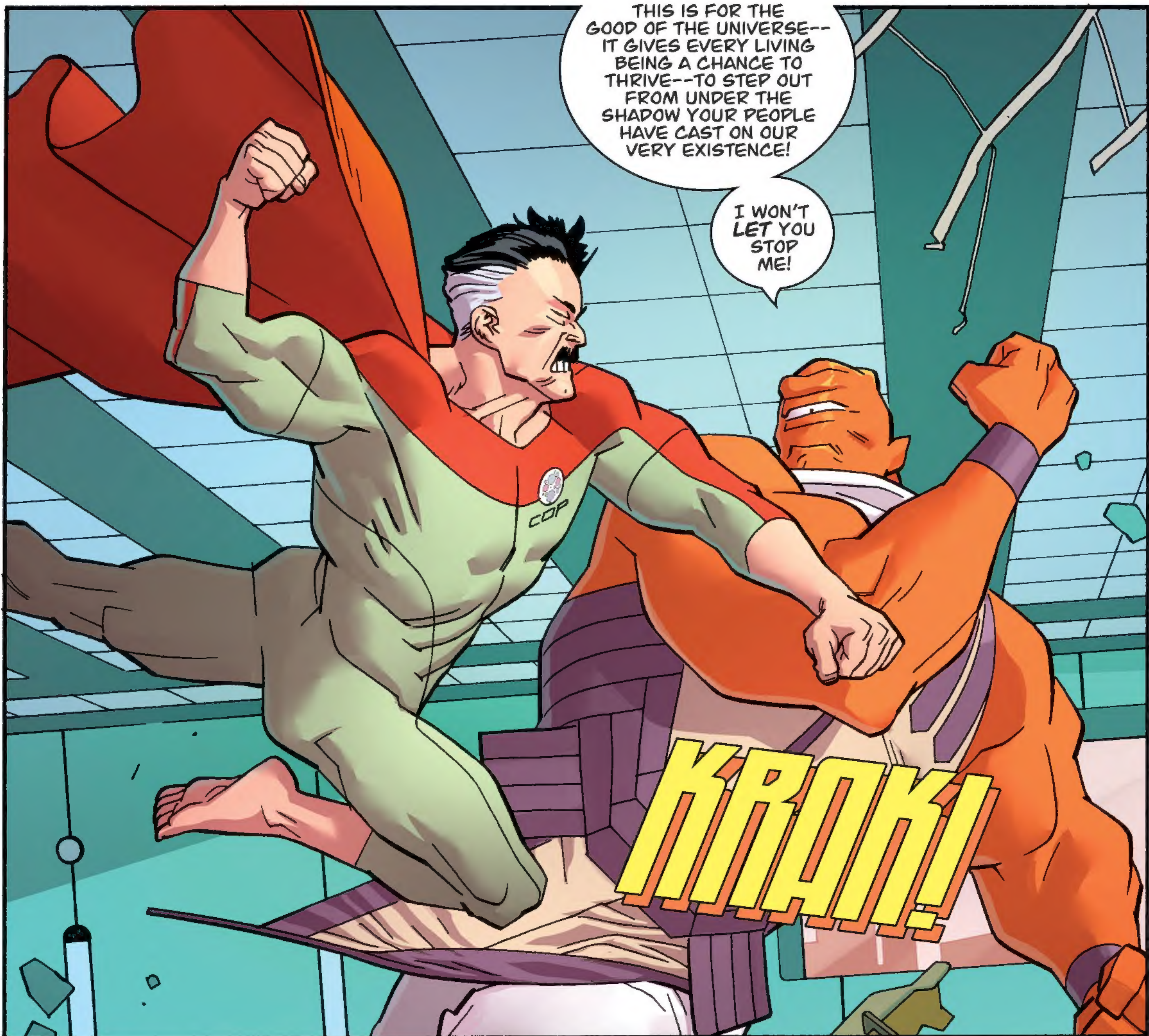
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THIS IS FOR THE GOOD OF THE UNIVERSE-- IT GIVES EVERY LIVING BEING A CHANCE TO THRIVE--TO STEP OUT FROM UNDER THE SHADOW YOUR PEOPLE HAVE CAST ON OUR VERY EXISTENCE!

I WON'T LET YOU STOP ME!

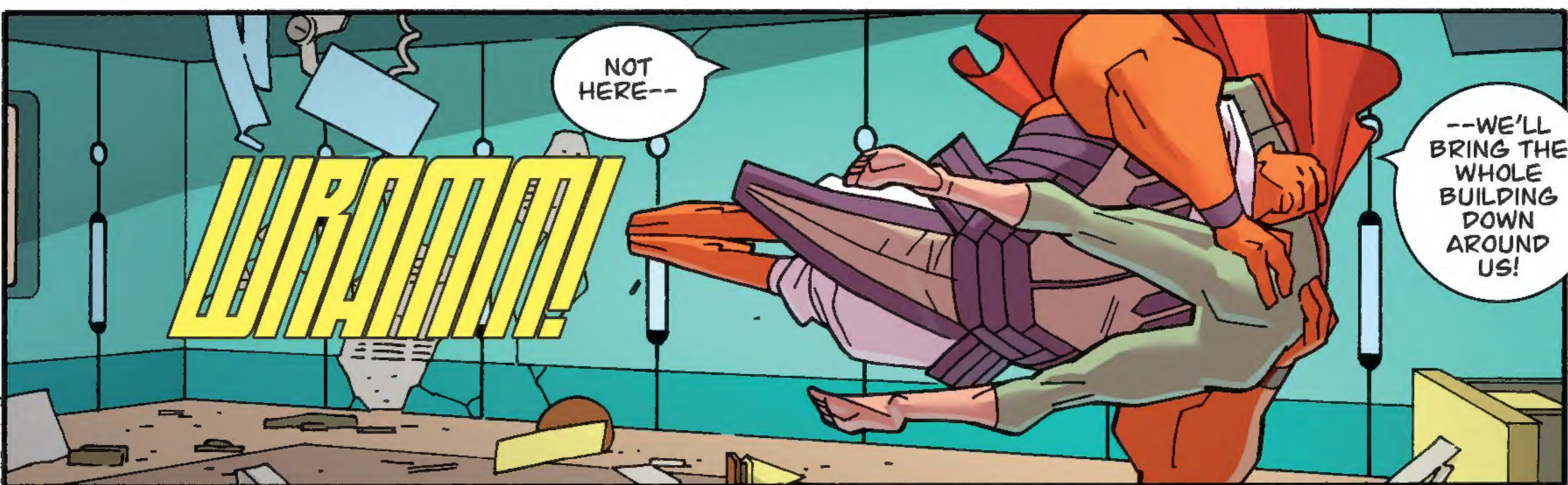
KROOK!



NO!

THE PEOPLE ON EARTH ARE INNOCENT! HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND?!

CHOOOM!



NOT HERE--

WIIRRRRR!

--WE'LL BRING THE WHOLE BUILDING DOWN AROUND US!





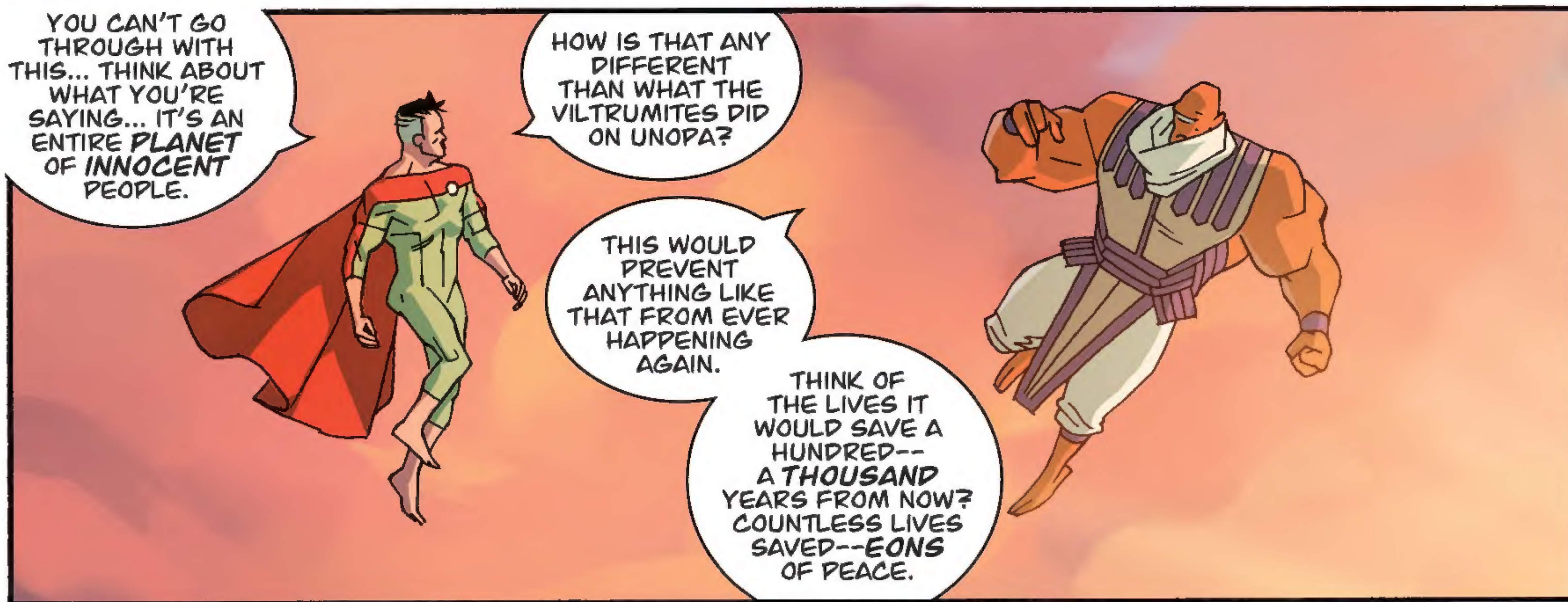




NO,  
WAIT--!



STOP!



YOU CAN'T GO  
THROUGH WITH  
THIS... THINK ABOUT  
WHAT YOU'RE  
SAYING... IT'S AN  
ENTIRE **PLANET**  
OF **INNOCENT**  
PEOPLE.

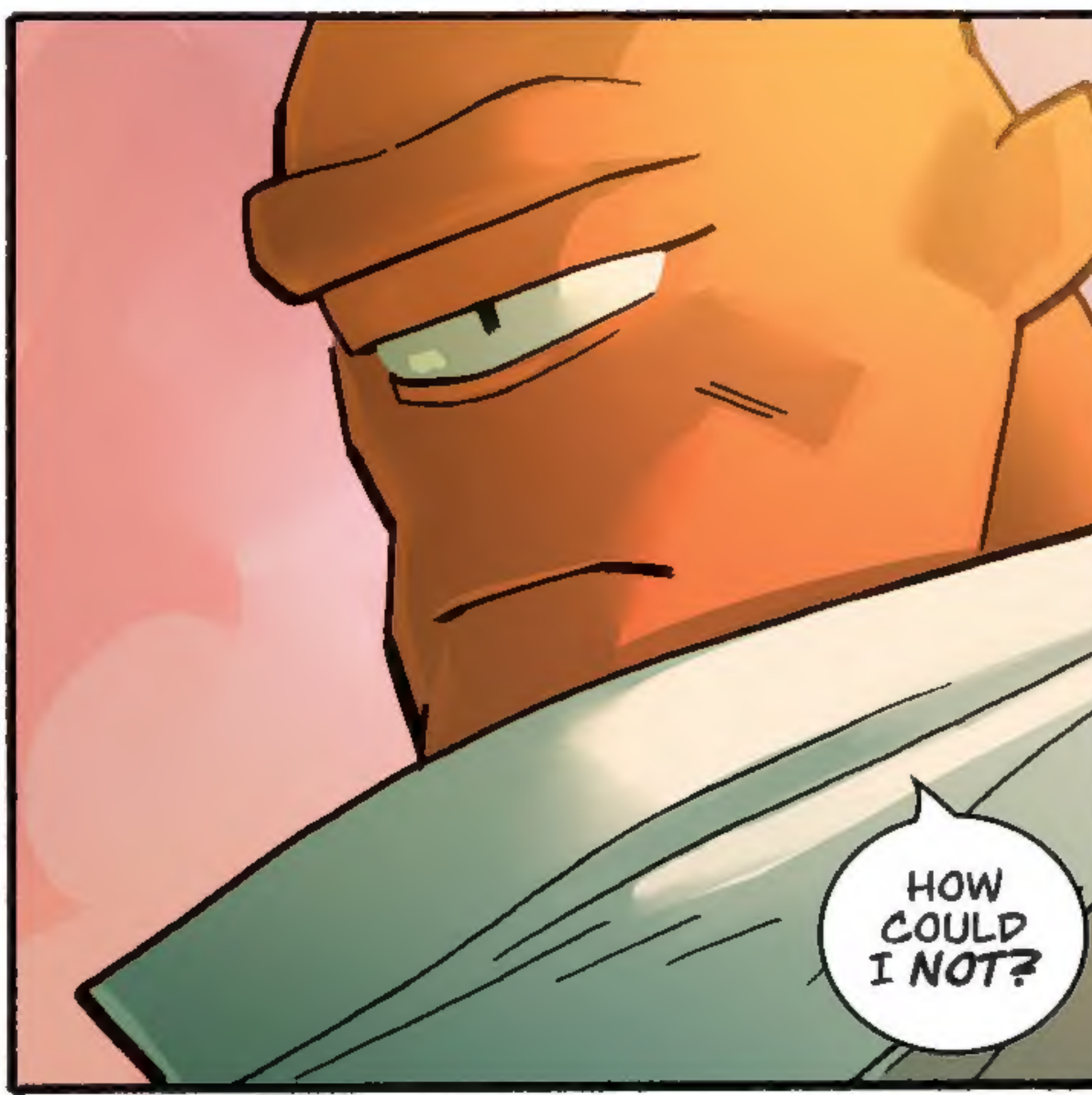
HOW IS THAT ANY  
DIFFERENT  
THAN WHAT THE  
VILTRUMITES DID  
ON UNOPA?

THIS WOULD  
PREVENT  
ANYTHING LIKE  
THAT FROM EVER  
HAPPENING  
AGAIN.

THINK OF  
THE LIVES IT  
WOULD SAVE A  
HUNDRED--  
A **THOUSAND**  
YEARS FROM NOW?  
COUNTLESS LIVES  
SAVED--**EONS**  
OF PEACE.

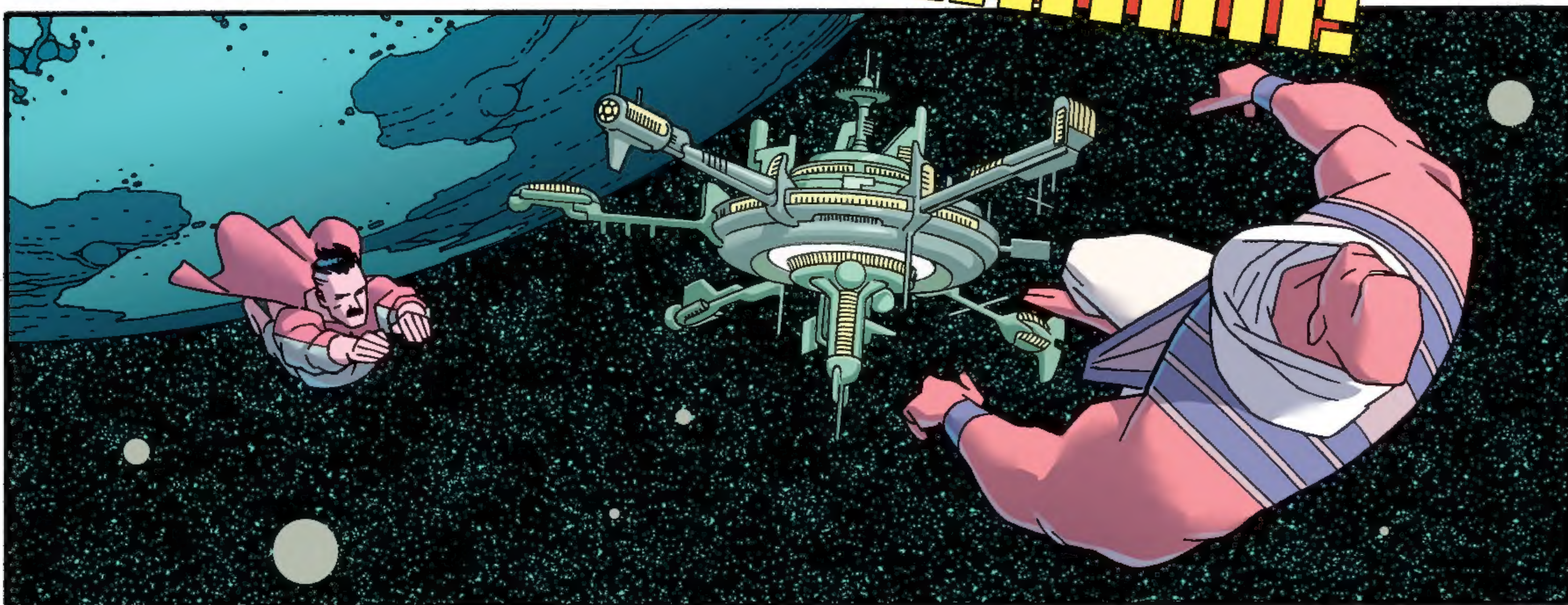


ALLEN...  
YOU **CAN'T**  
DO THIS.

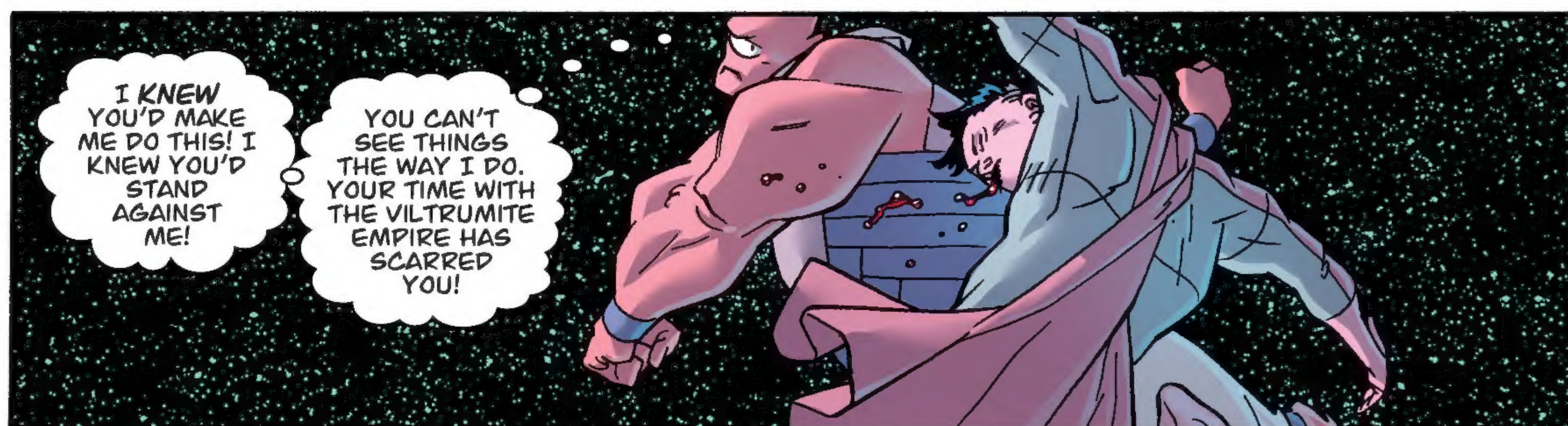


HOW  
COULD  
I **NOT**?









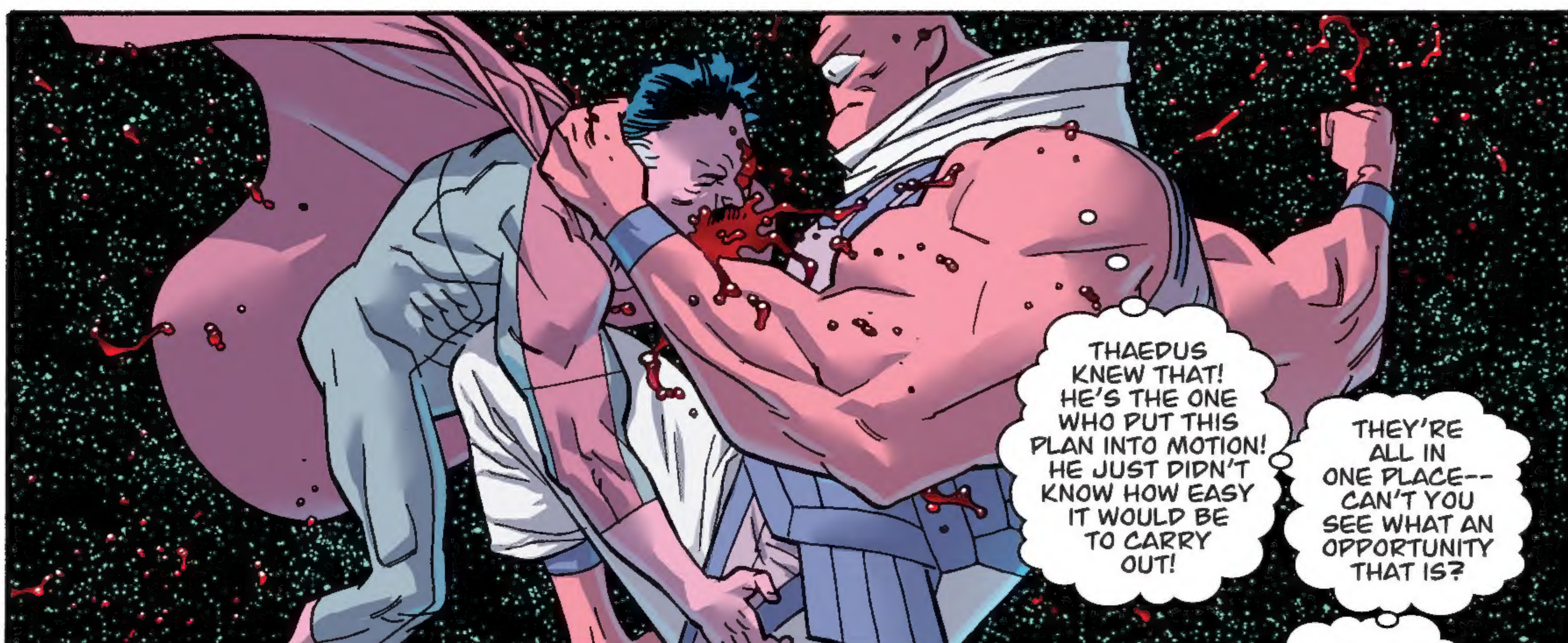
I KNEW  
YOU'D MAKE  
ME DO THIS! I  
KNEW YOU'D  
STAND  
AGAINST  
ME!

YOU CAN'T  
SEE THINGS  
THE WAY I DO.  
YOUR TIME WITH  
THE VILTRUMITE  
EMPIRE HAS  
SCARRED  
YOU!



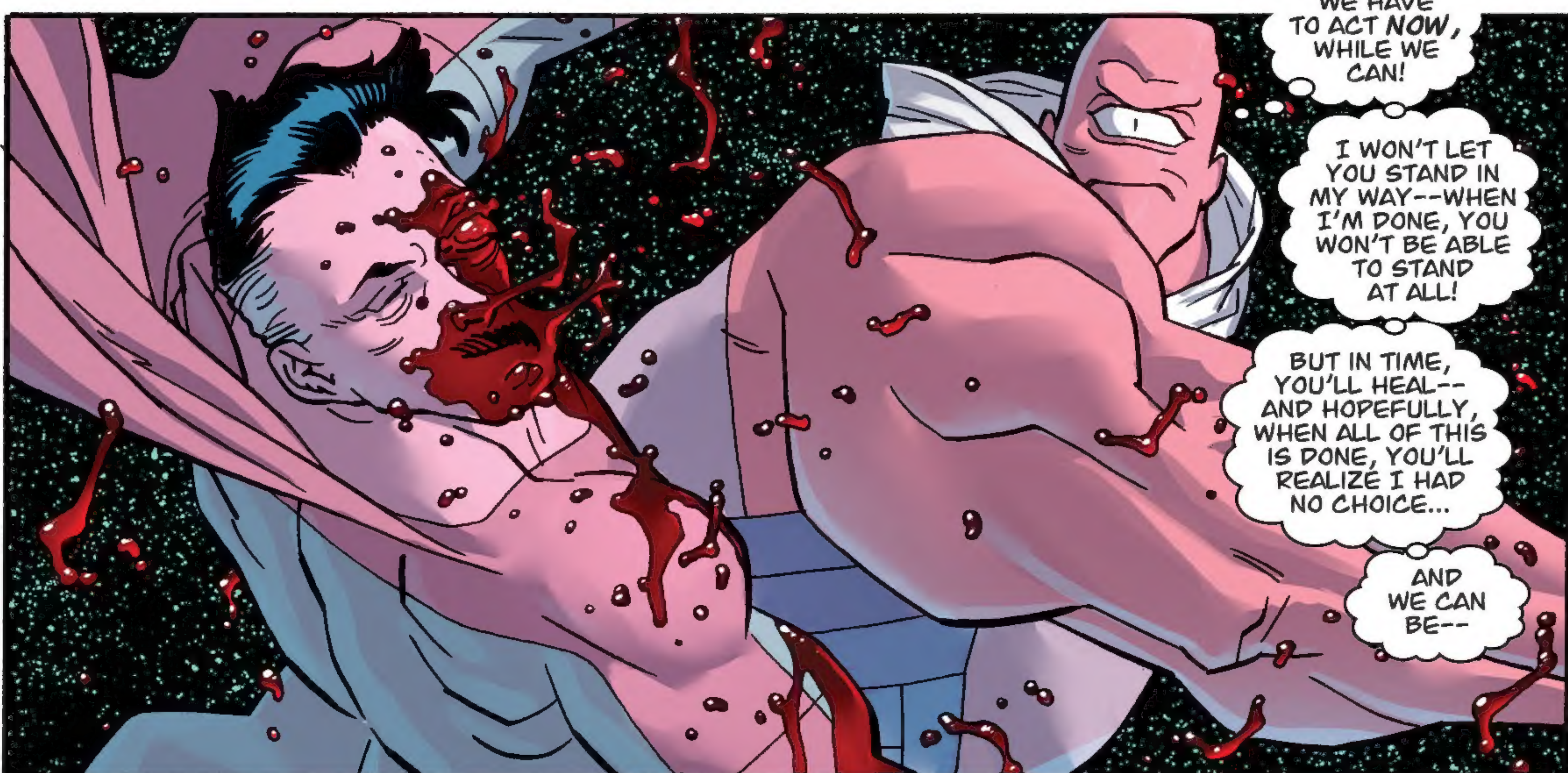
YOU FEEL  
LIKE IF YOU TAKE  
ONE STEP BACK  
TOWARD THAT  
LIFE--YOU WON'T  
COME BACK!

BUT I LEAD  
THE COALITION  
NOW! I HAVE TO  
PROTECT MILLIONS  
OF LIVES! SOMETIMES  
THESE KINDS OF  
DECISIONS HAVE  
TO BE MADE!



THAEDUS  
KNEW THAT!  
HE'S THE ONE  
WHO PUT THIS  
PLAN INTO MOTION!  
HE JUST DIDN'T  
KNOW HOW EASY  
IT WOULD BE  
TO CARRY  
OUT!

THEY'RE  
ALL IN  
ONE PLACE--  
CAN'T YOU  
SEE WHAT AN  
OPPORTUNITY  
THAT IS?



WE HAVE  
TO ACT NOW,  
WHILE WE  
CAN!

I WON'T LET  
YOU STAND IN  
MY WAY--WHEN  
I'M DONE, YOU  
WON'T BE ABLE  
TO STAND  
AT ALL!

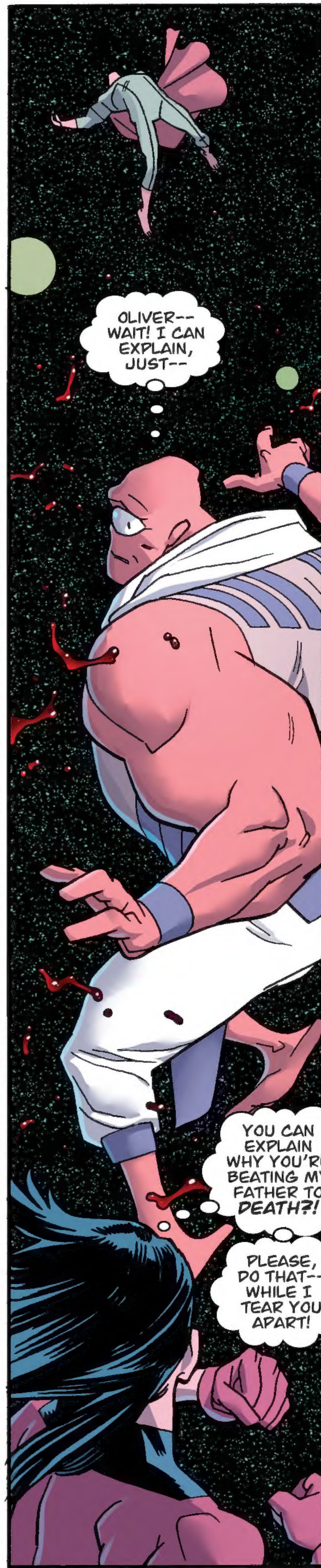
BUT IN TIME,  
YOU'LL HEAL--  
AND HOPEFULLY,  
WHEN ALL OF THIS  
IS DONE, YOU'LL  
REALIZE I HAD  
NO CHOICE...

AND  
WE CAN  
BE--





ALLEN!  
MY GOD--  
WHAT THE  
HELL ARE YOU  
DOING?!

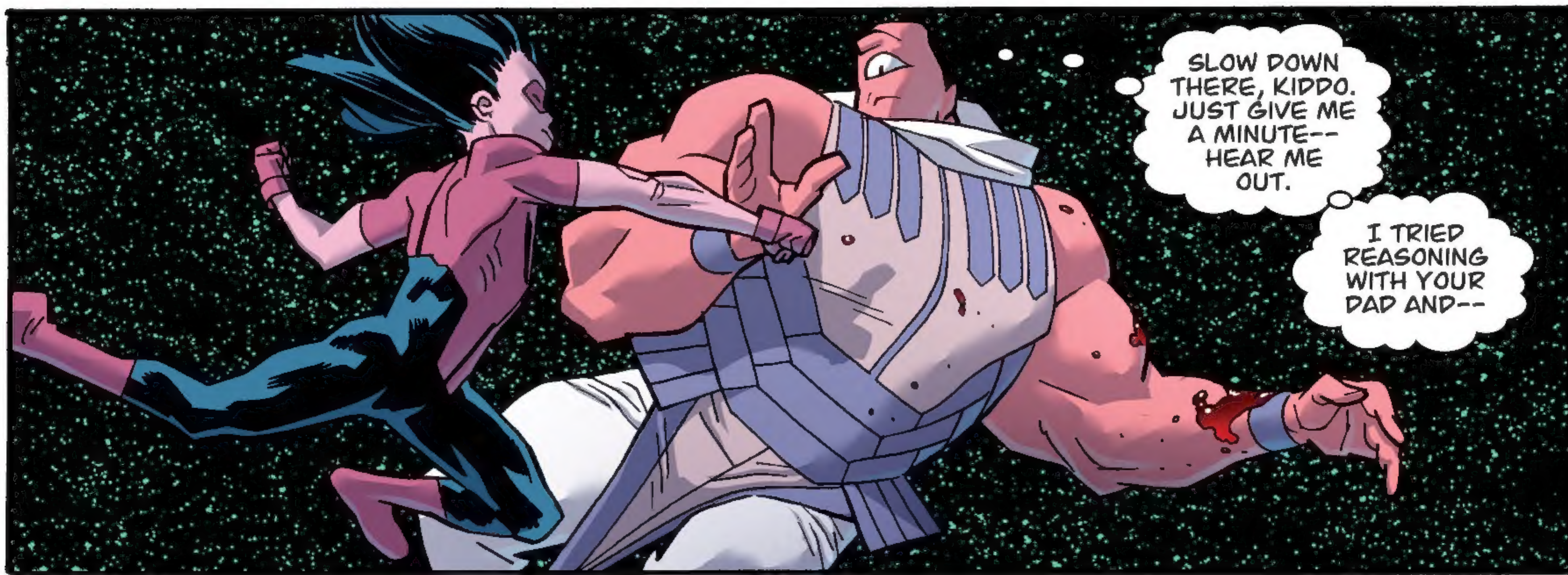


OLIVER--  
WAIT! I CAN  
EXPLAIN,  
JUST--

YOU CAN  
EXPLAIN  
WHY YOU'RE  
BEATING MY  
FATHER TO  
DEATH?!

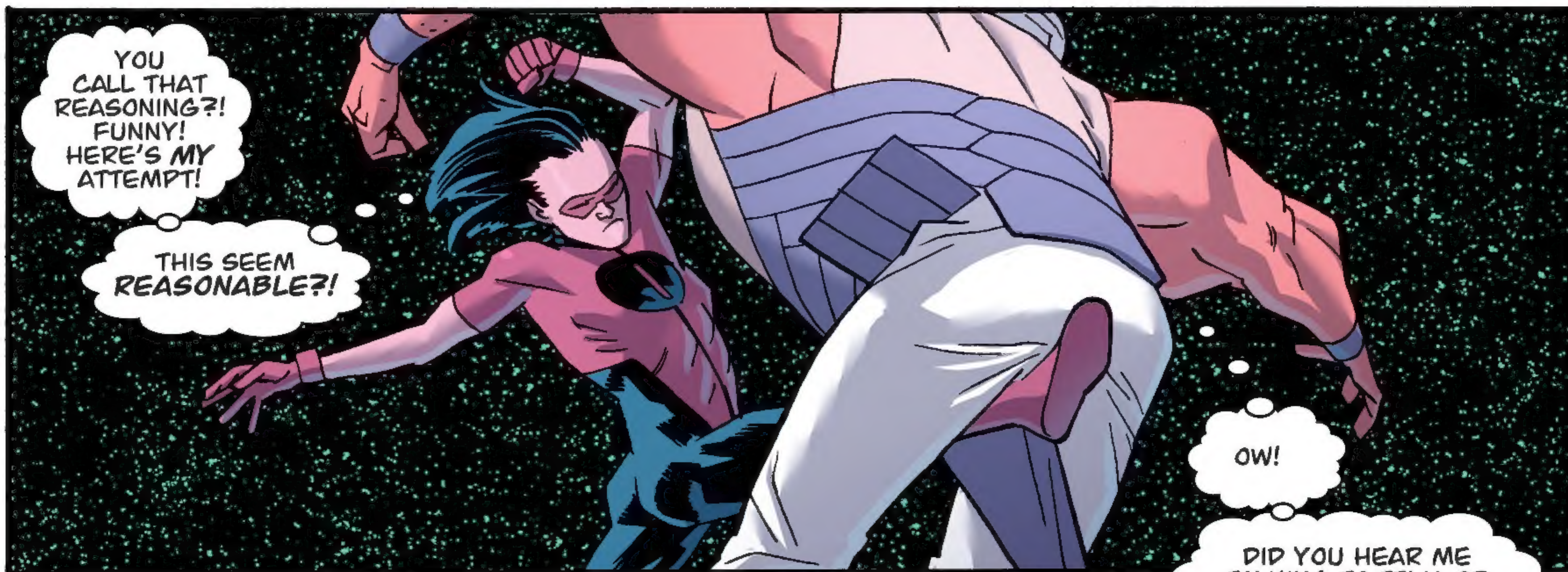
PLEASE,  
DO THAT--  
WHILE I  
TEAR YOU  
APART!





SLOW DOWN THERE, KIDDO. JUST GIVE ME A MINUTE-- HEAR ME OUT.

I TRIED REASONING WITH YOUR DAD AND--

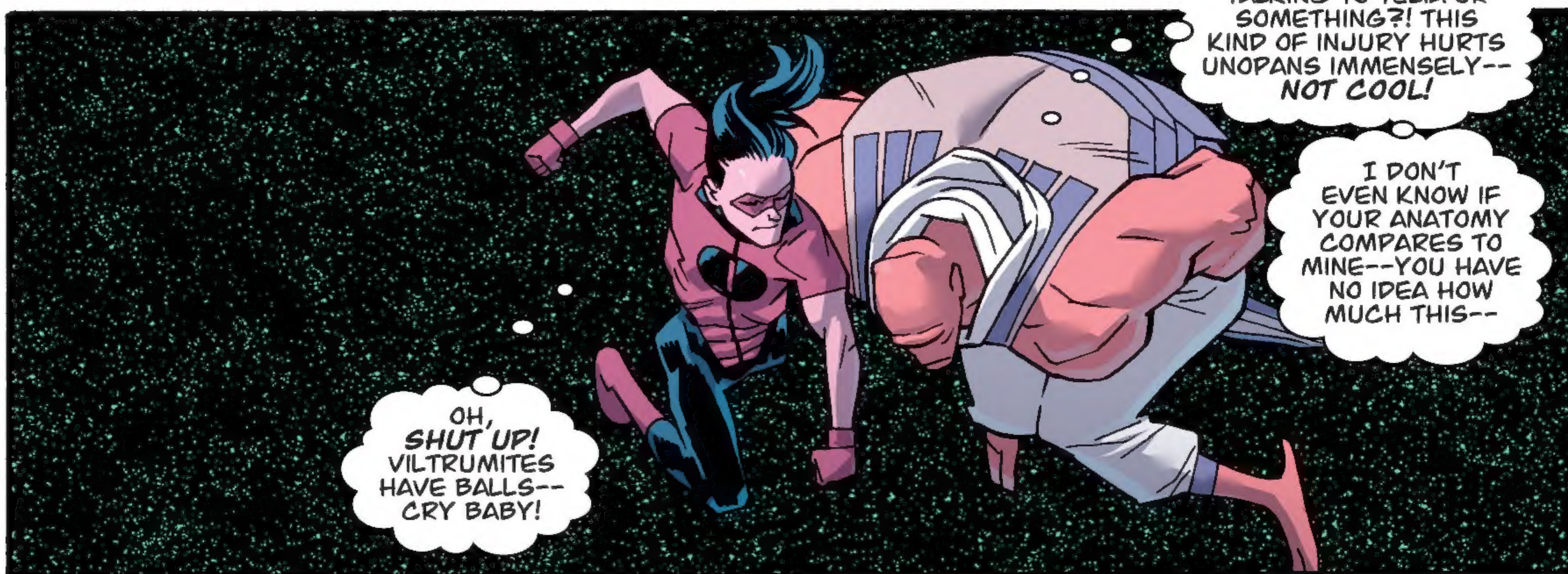


YOU CALL THAT REASONING?! FUNNY! HERE'S MY ATTEMPT!

THIS SEEM REASONABLE?!

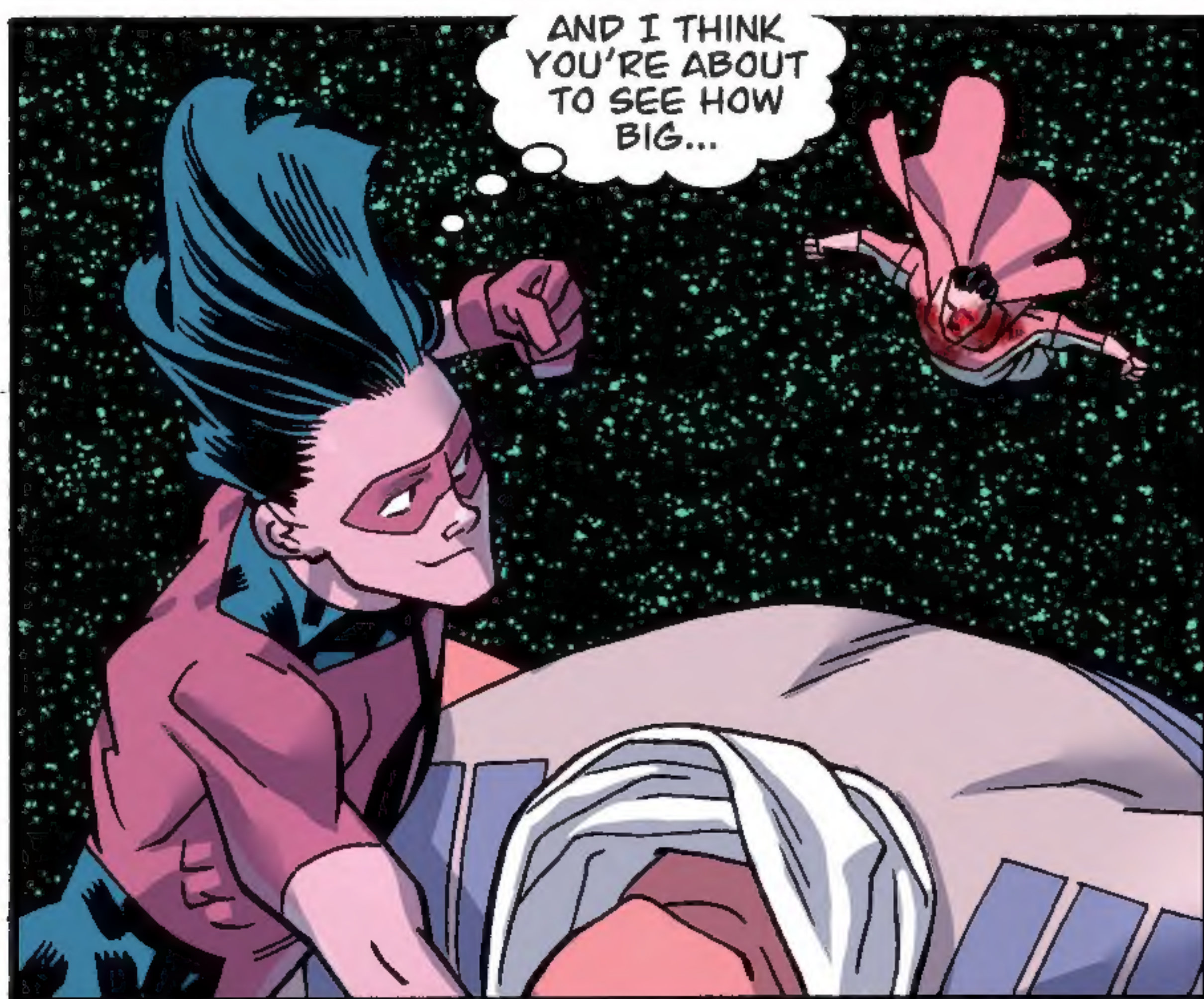
OW!

DID YOU HEAR ME TALKING TO TELIA OR SOMETHING?! THIS KIND OF INJURY HURTS UNOPANS IMMENSELY-- NOT COOL!

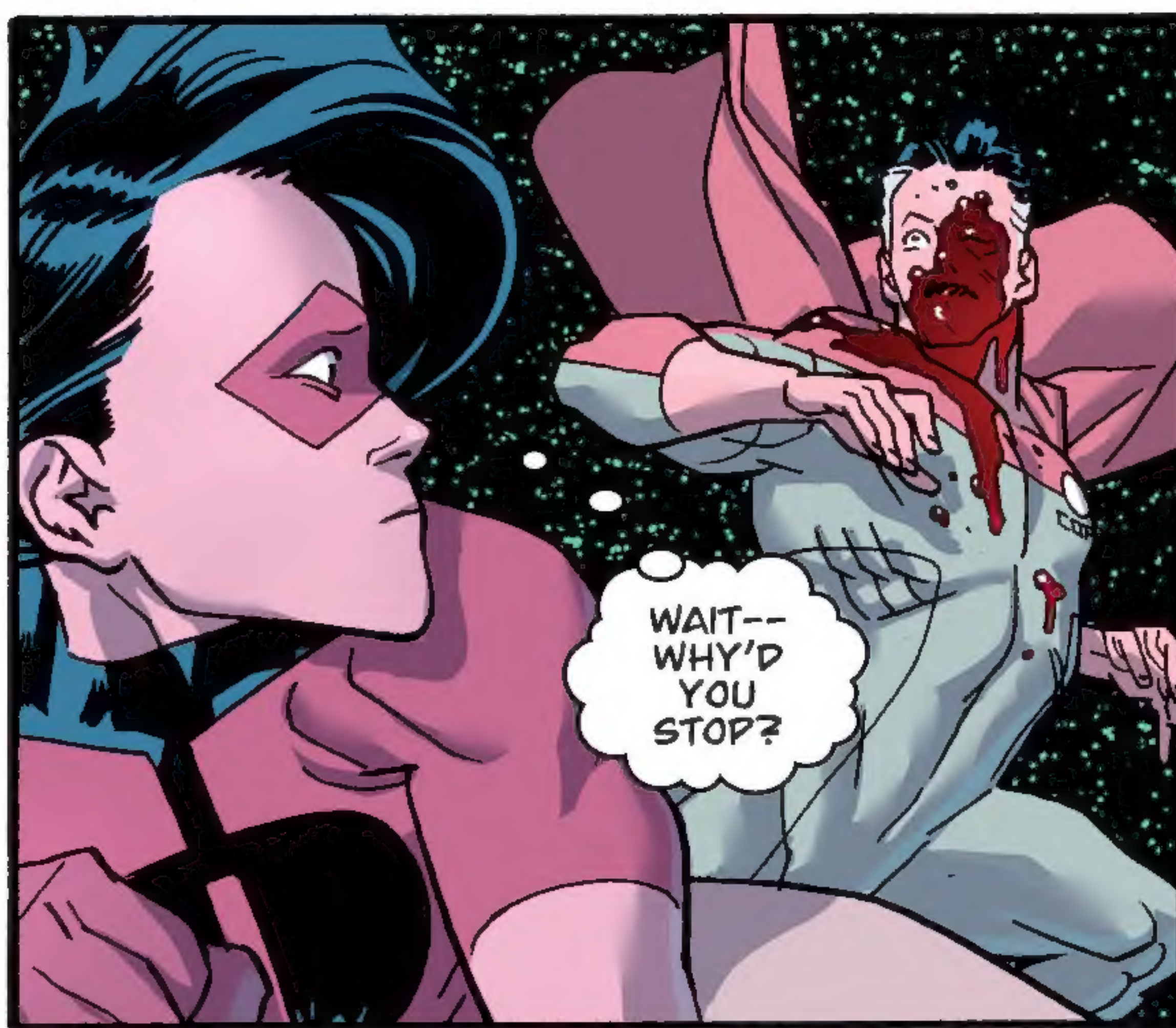


I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF YOUR ANATOMY COMPARES TO MINE--YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW MUCH THIS--

OH, SHUT UP! VILTRUMITES HAVE BALLS-- CRY BABY!



AND I THINK YOU'RE ABOUT TO SEE HOW BIG...

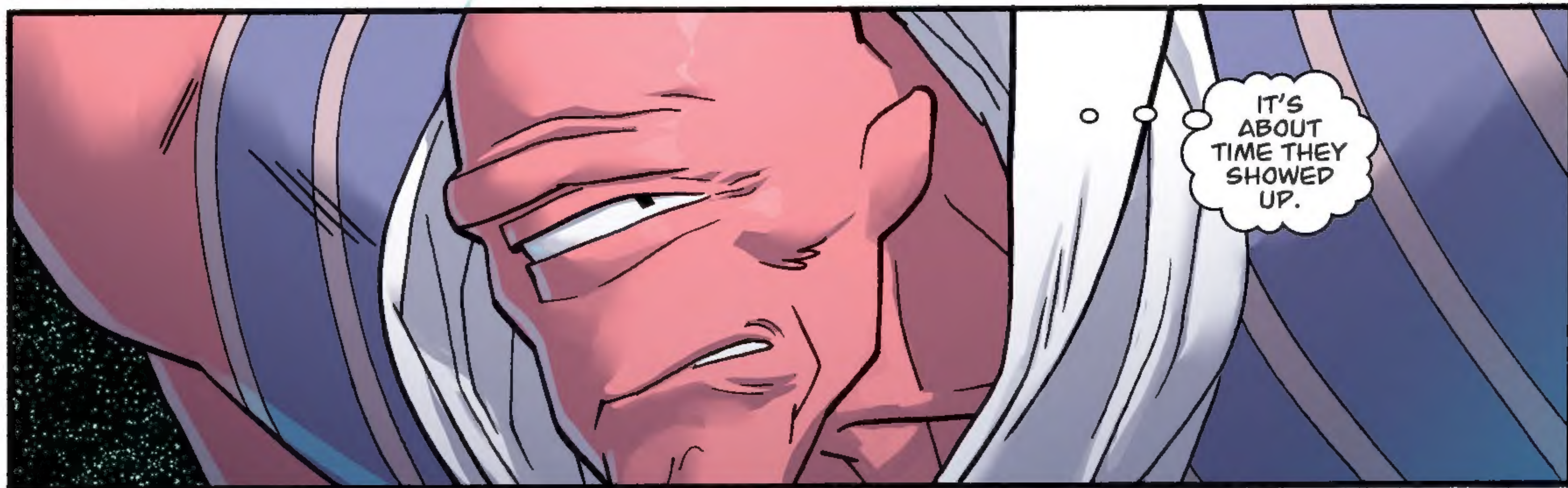


WAIT-- WHY'D YOU STOP?





OH.

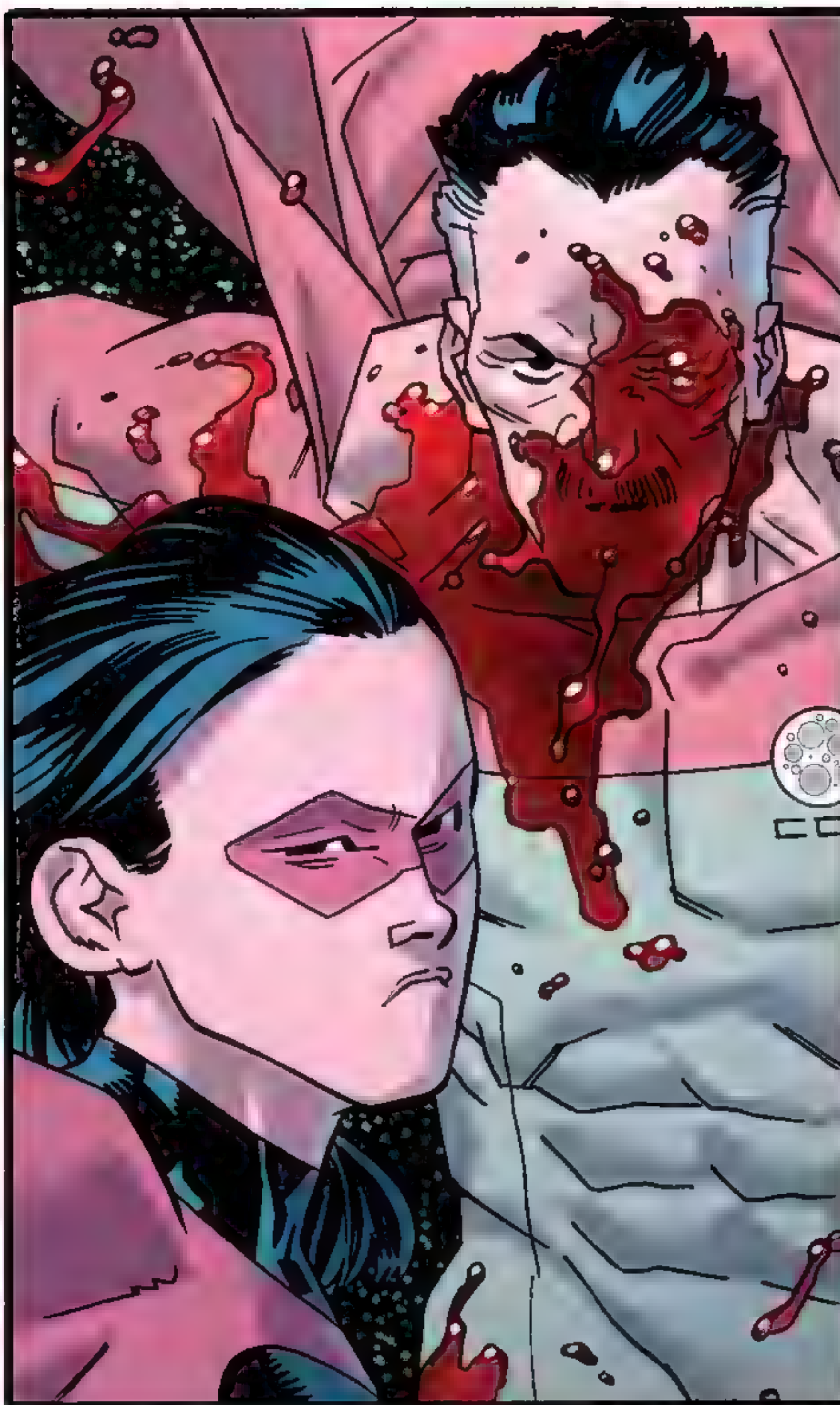


IT'S ABOUT TIME THEY SHOWED UP.





OKAY...



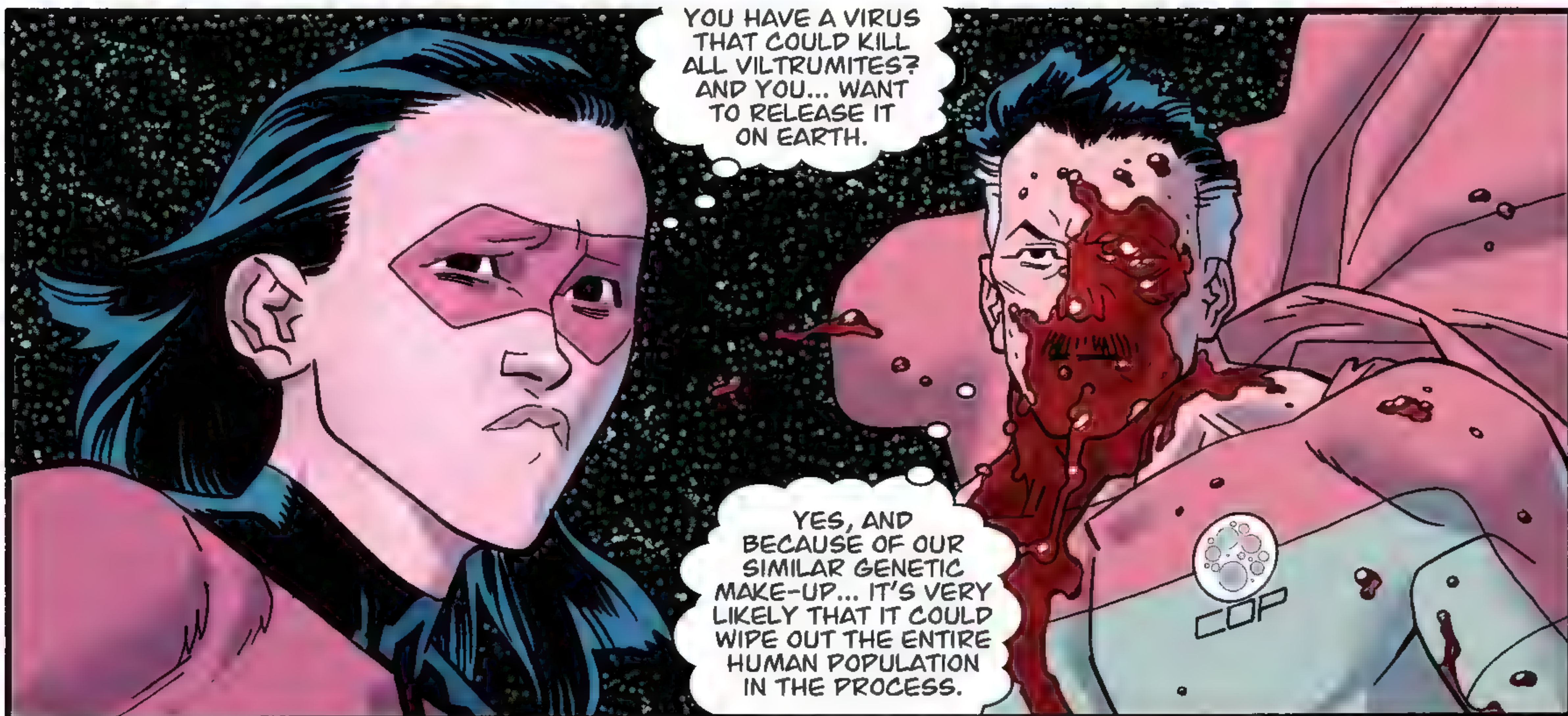
LET ME TRY  
THIS AGAIN  
WHILE THE  
THREAT OF MY  
SOLDIERS HAS  
YOU WILLING  
TO LISTEN.



IF I RELEASE THE SCOURGE  
VIRUS ON EARTH--IT'S NOT  
ONE-HUNDRED PERCENT  
CERTAIN THAT IT WILL  
AFFECT THE HUMAN  
POPULATION THERE. IT'S  
**POSSIBLE...** BUT  
THAT'S IT.

IF YOU THINK  
ABOUT THIS...  
REALLY CONSIDER  
WHAT IS AT STAKE  
HERE, YOU'LL  
SEE THAT I'M  
RIGHT.

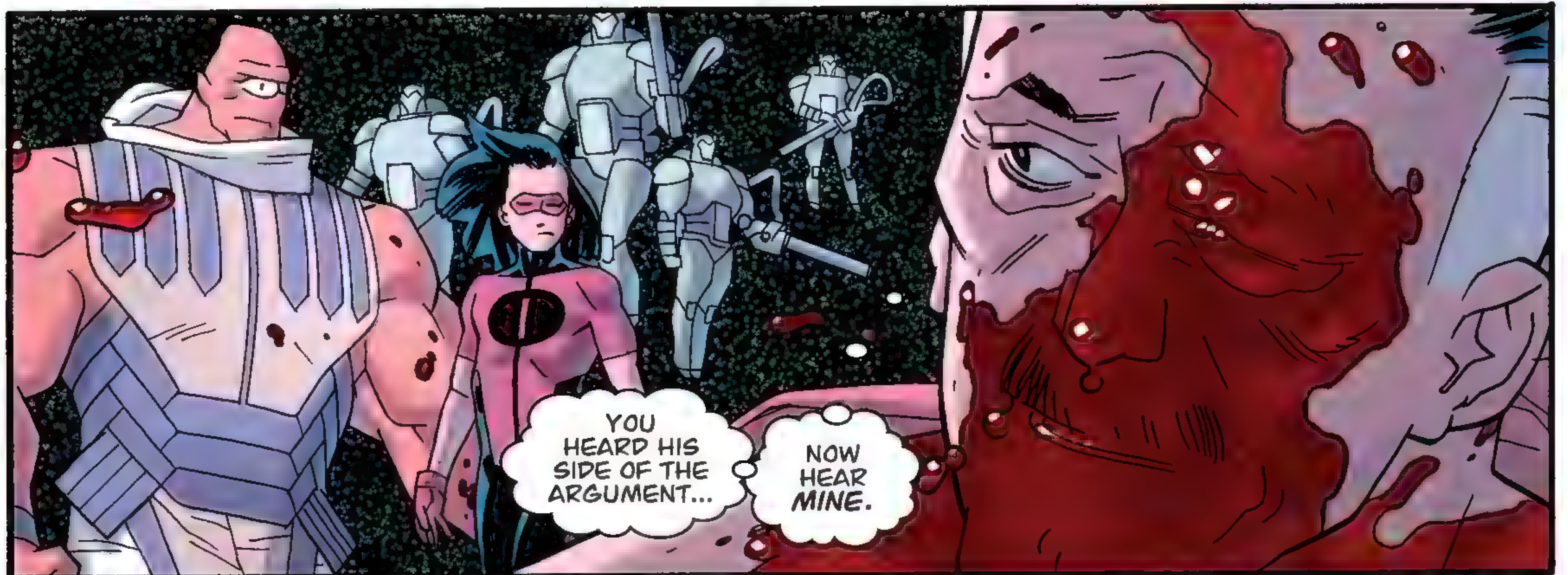
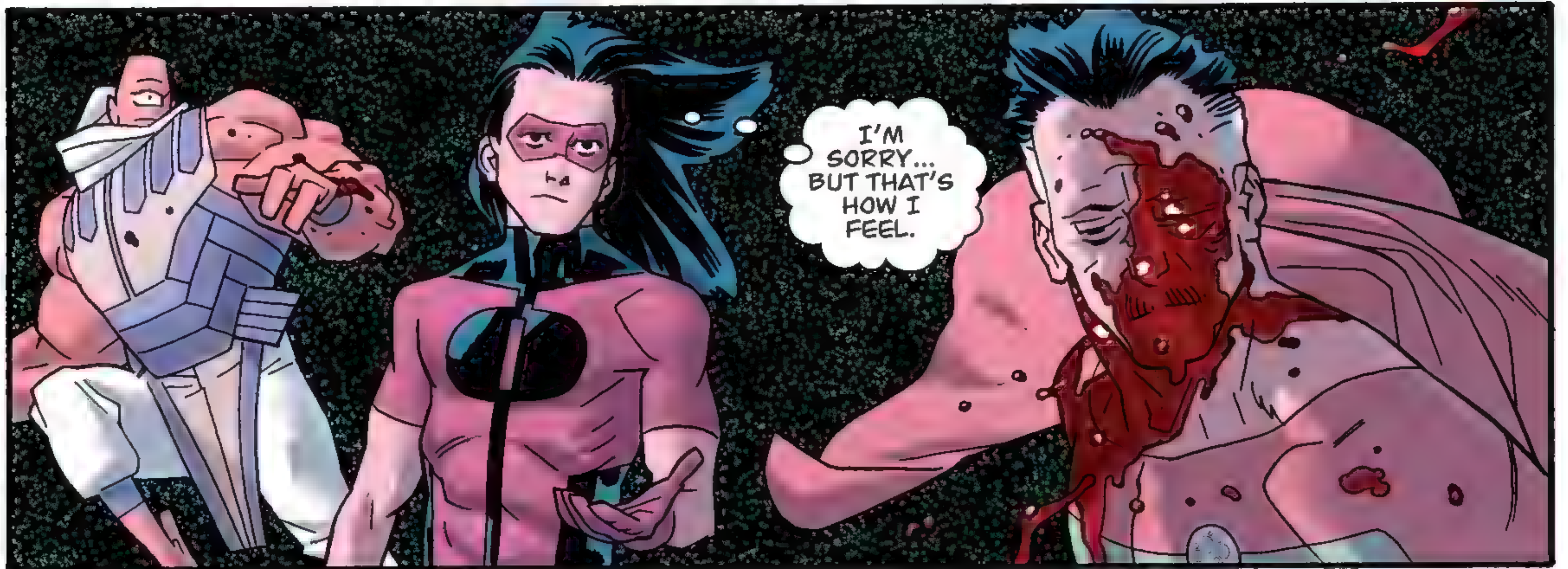
I'M SORRY,  
BUT--THAT'S A  
RISK WORTH  
TAKING. IF THAT  
VIRUS CAN WIPE OUT  
THE VILTRUMITES  
ONCE AND FOR ALL--  
RID THE UNIVERSE  
OF THAT THREAT...  
I HAVE TO  
DO IT.



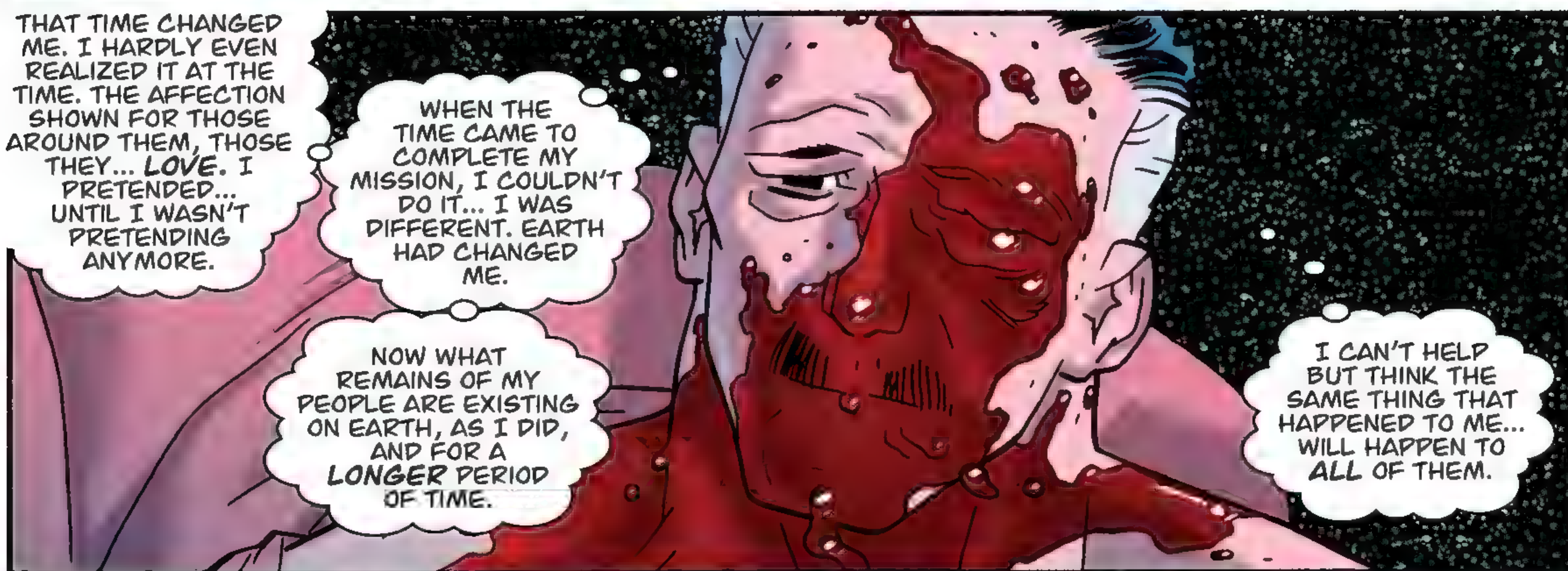
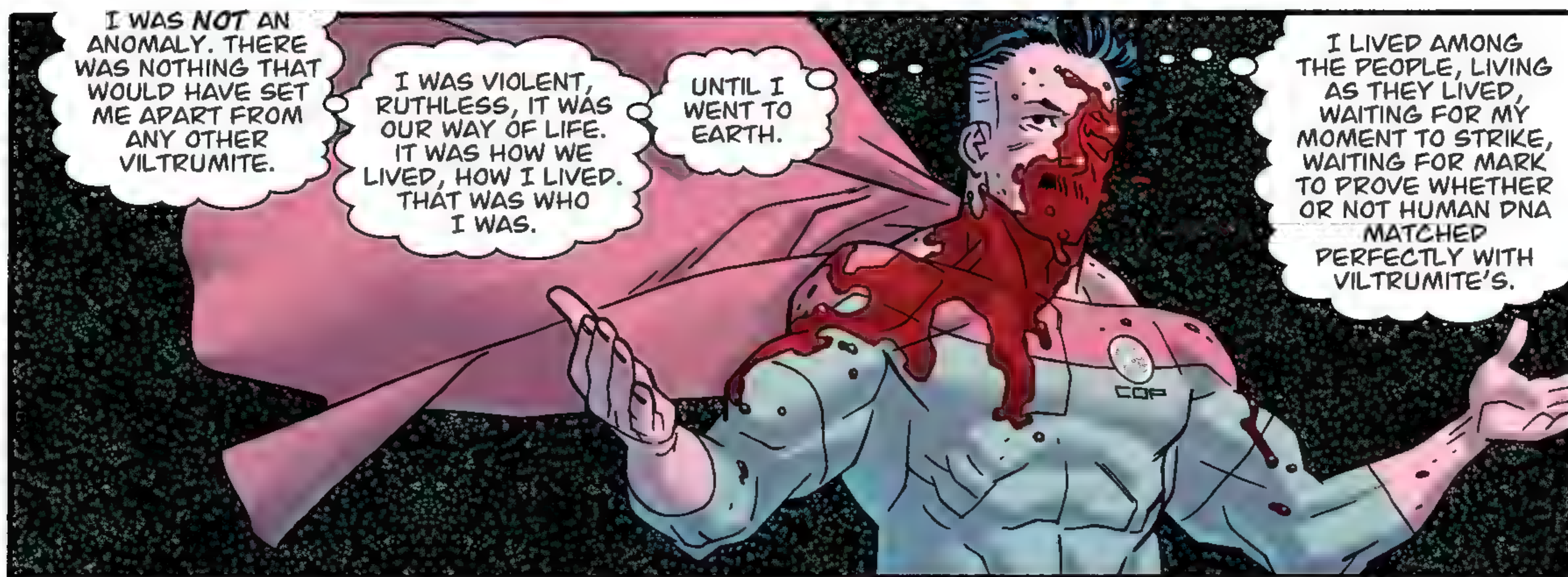
YOU HAVE A VIRUS  
THAT COULD KILL  
ALL VILTRUMITES?  
AND YOU... WANT  
TO RELEASE IT  
ON EARTH.

YES, AND  
BECAUSE OF OUR  
SIMILAR GENETIC  
MAKE-UP... IT'S VERY  
LIKELY THAT IT COULD  
WIPE OUT THE ENTIRE  
HUMAN POPULATION  
IN THE PROCESS.

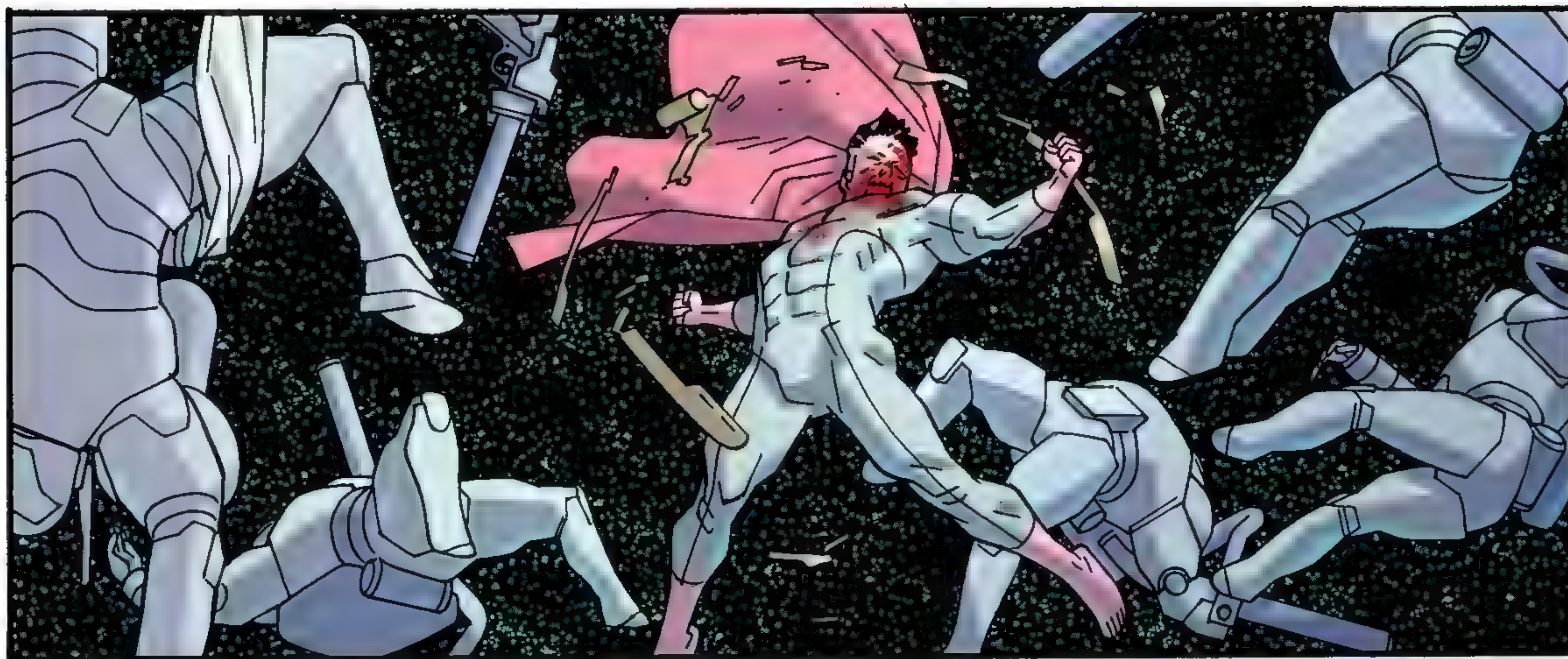
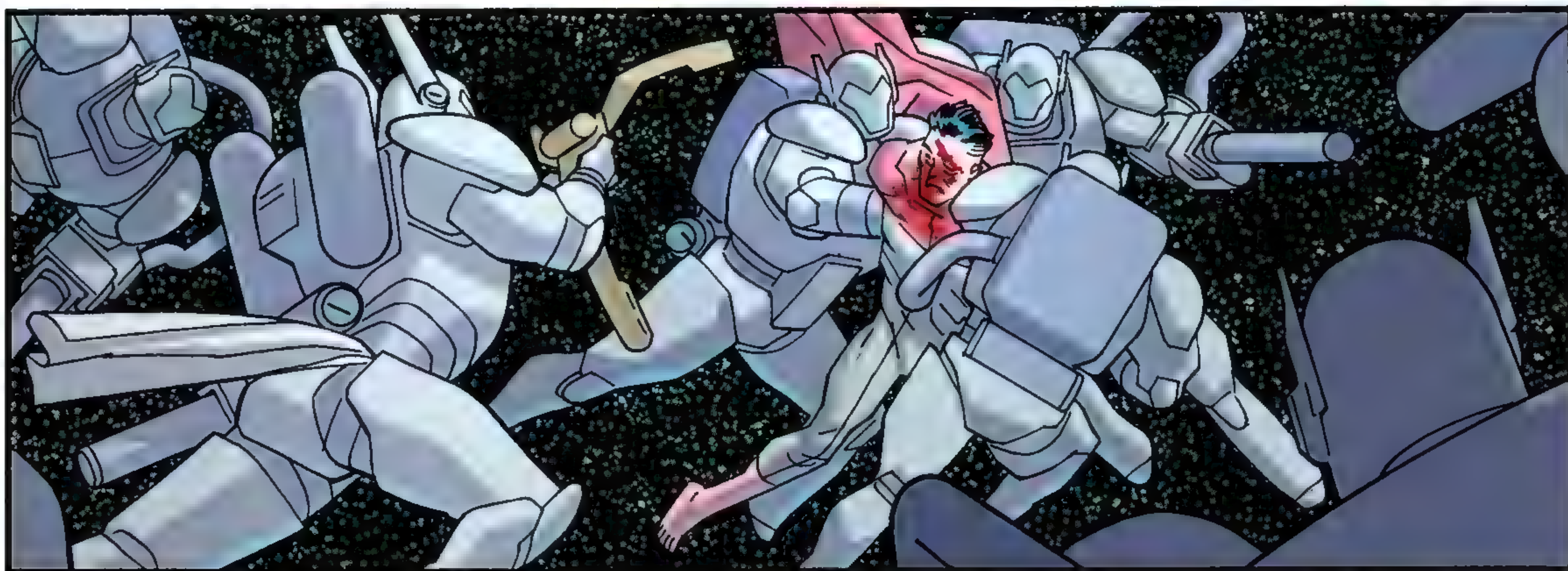




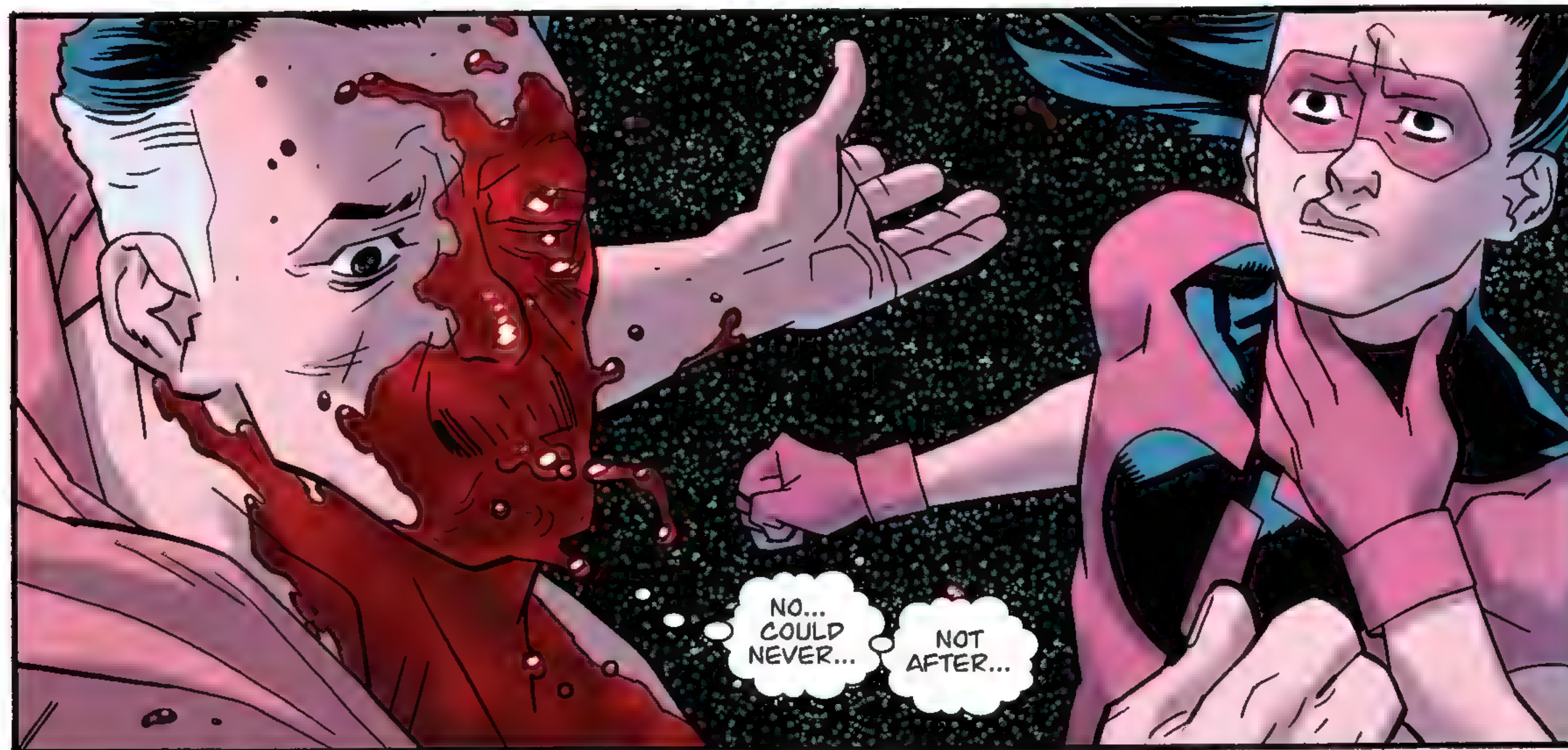
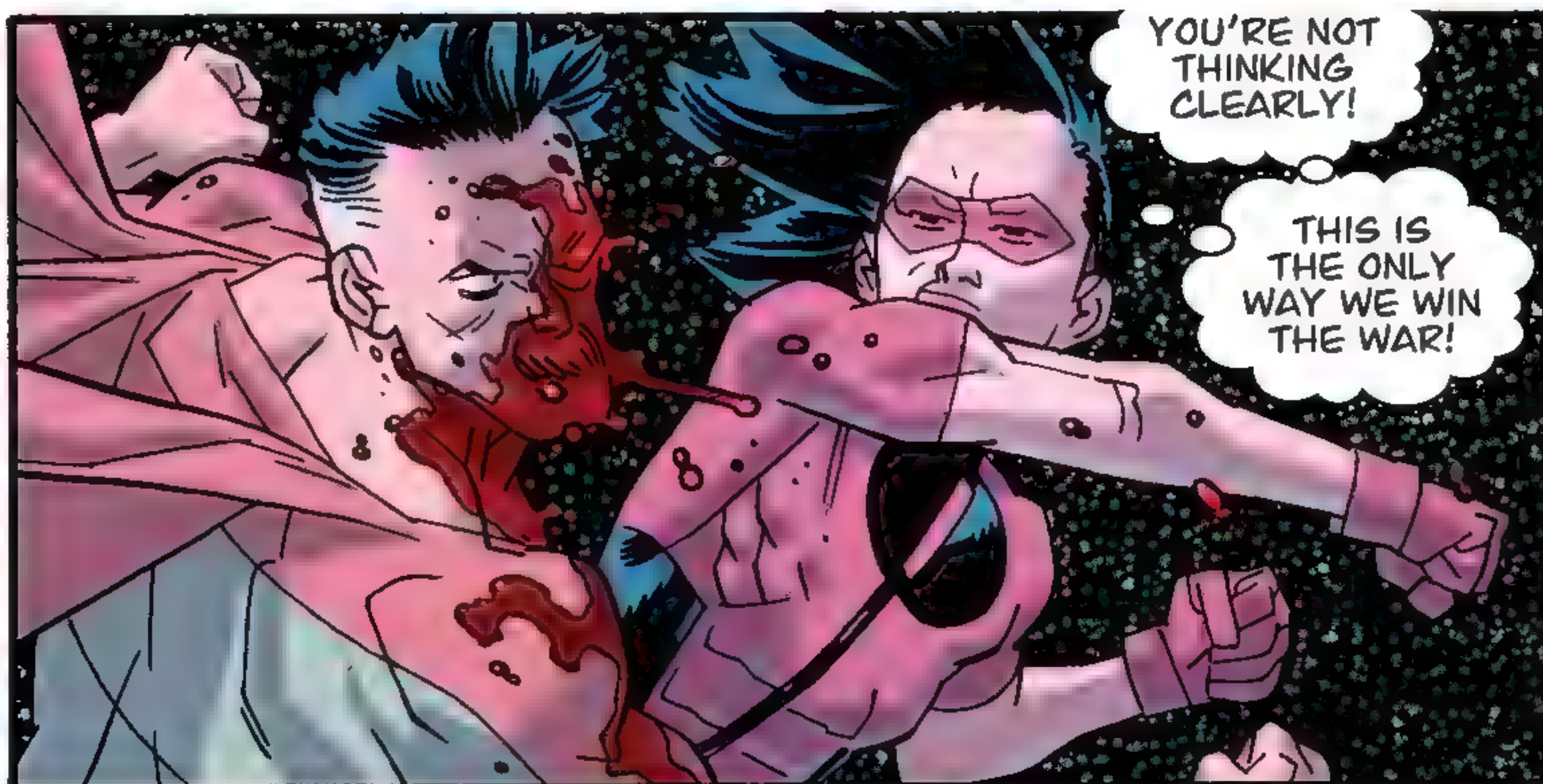
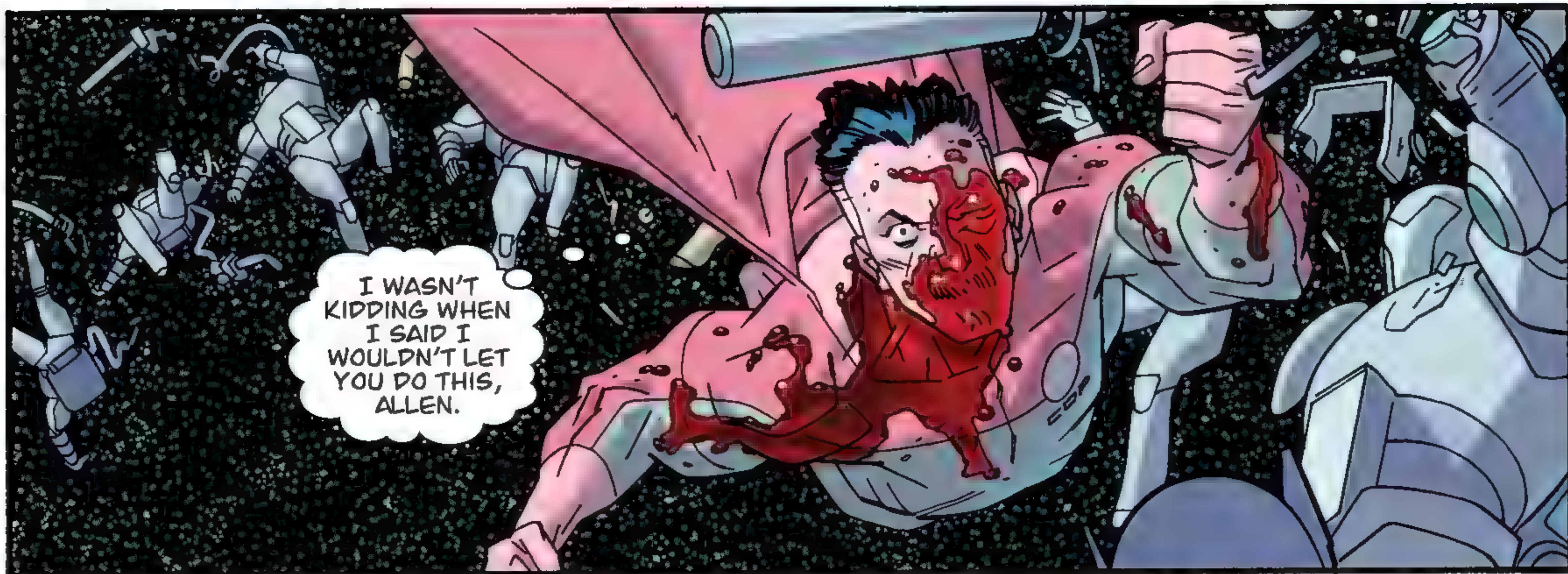












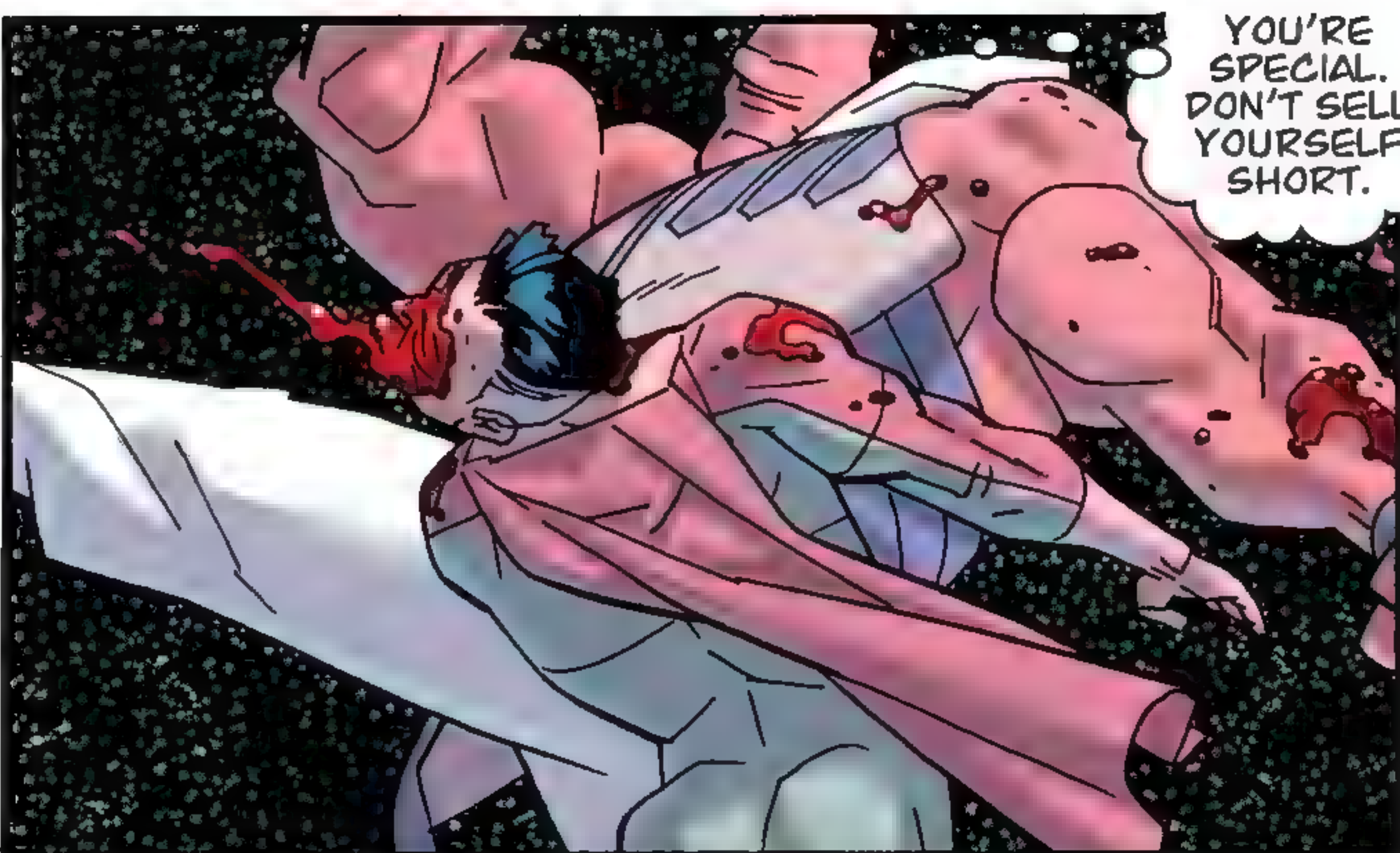


WELL, THAT  
WAS TOUCHING...  
YOU HAVE  
CHANGED.

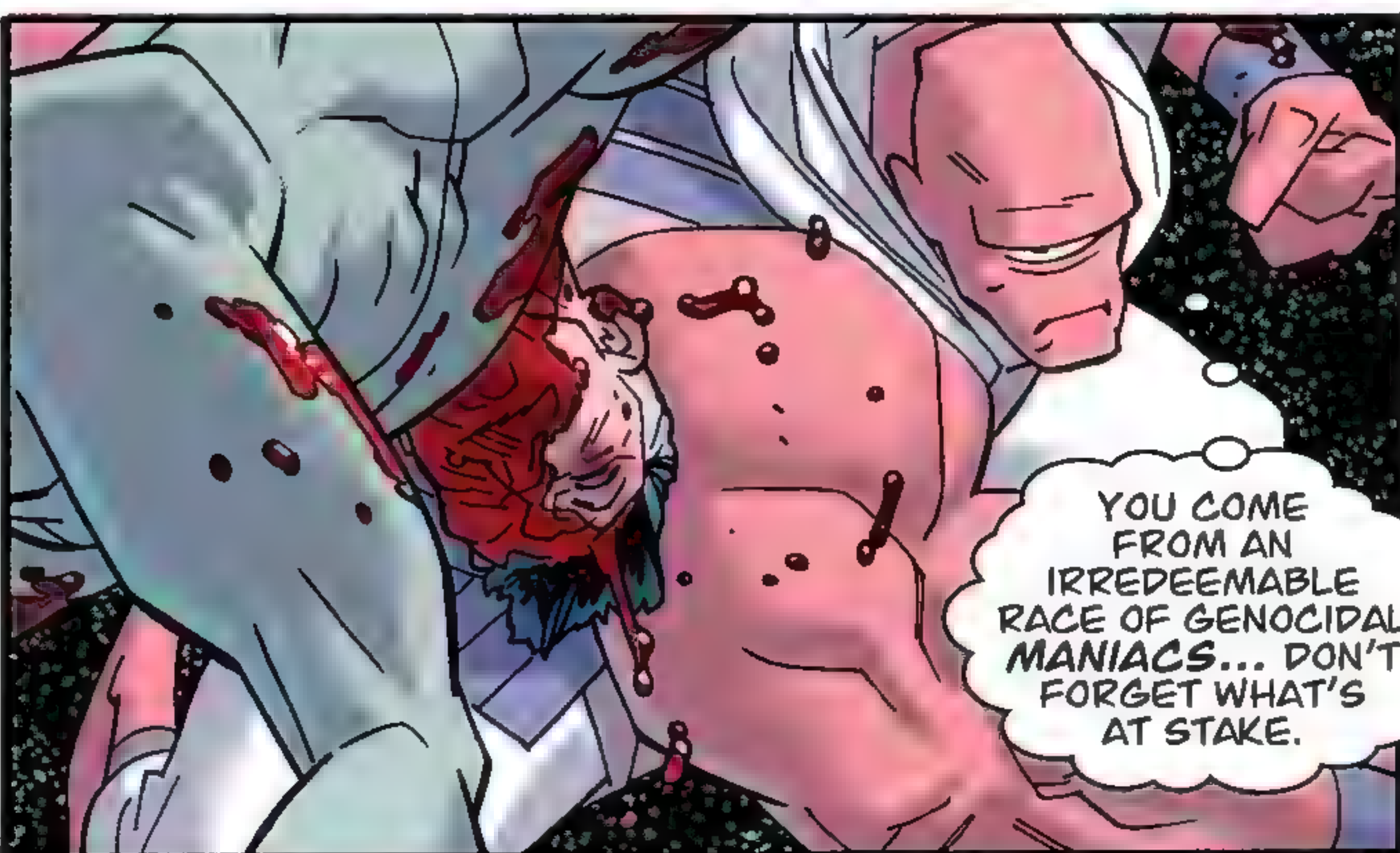
STILL, THOUGH...  
I'M **CONVINCED**  
YOU'RE AN ANOMALY.  
I JUST CAN'T SEE  
GRAND REGENT THRAGG  
MARRYING A NICE  
LITTLE HUMAN WOMAN  
AND SETTLING  
DOWN.



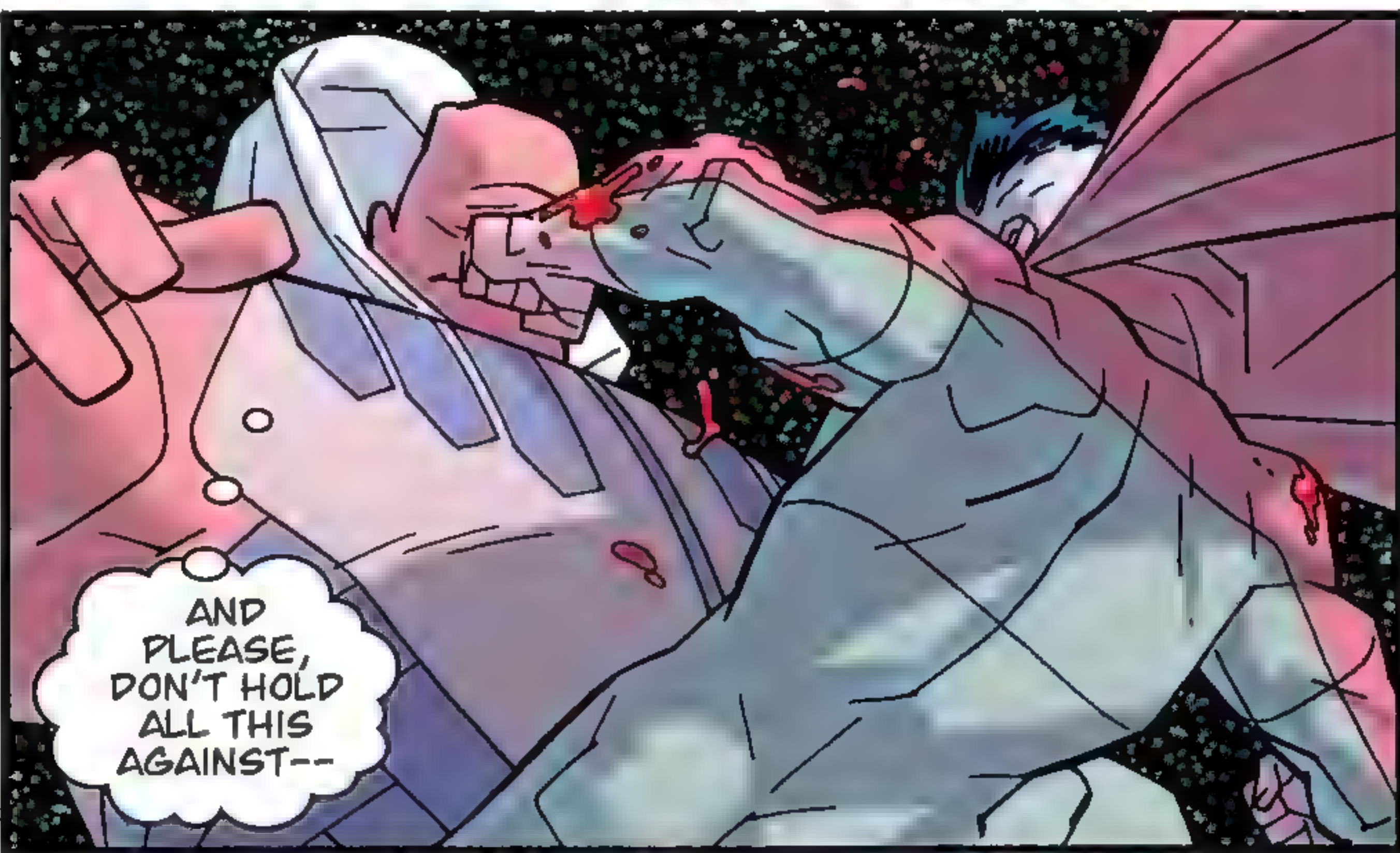
YOU'RE  
SPECIAL.  
DON'T SELL  
YOURSELF  
SHORT.



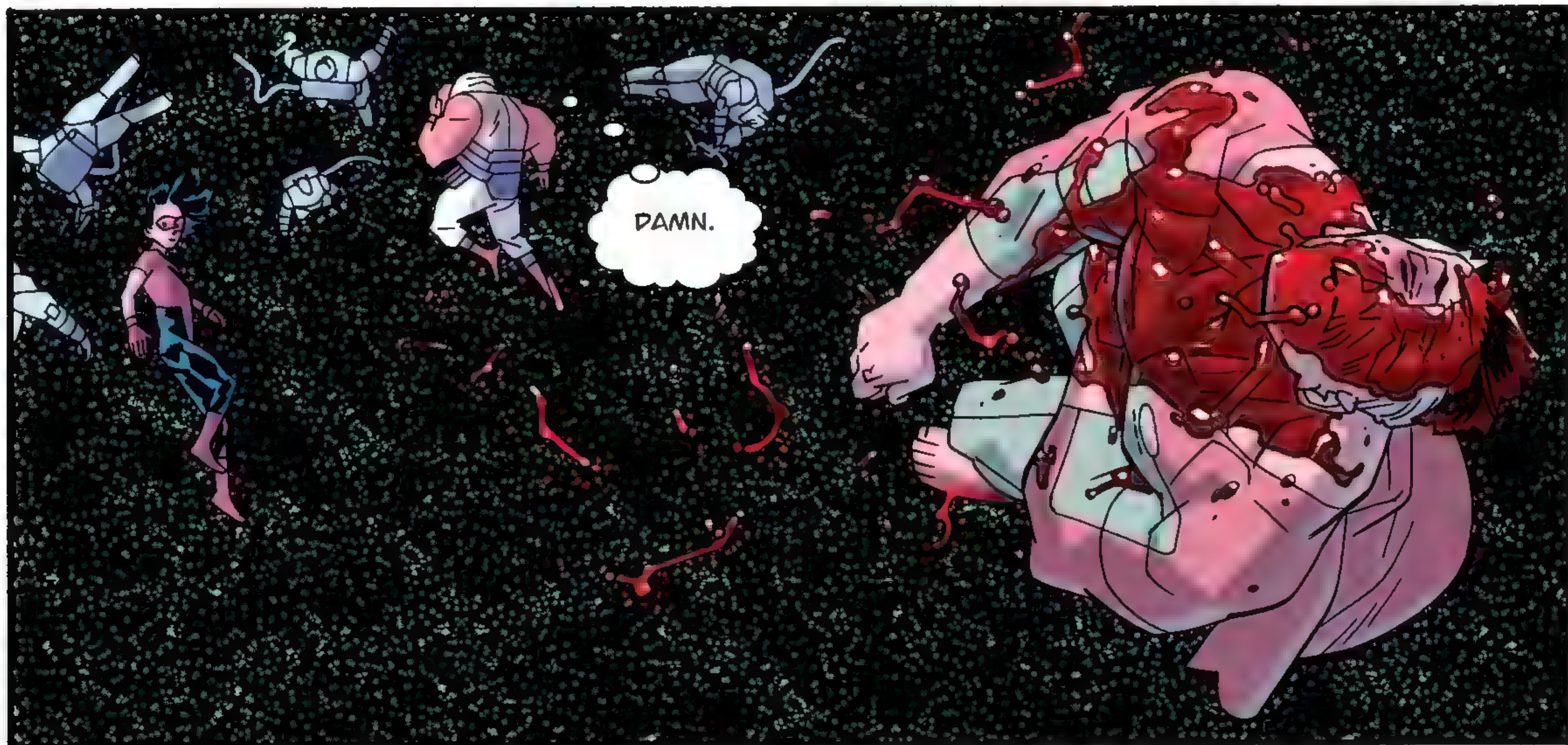
YOU COME  
FROM AN  
IRREDEEMABLE  
RACE OF GENOCIDAL  
MANIACS... DON'T  
FORGET WHAT'S  
AT STAKE.



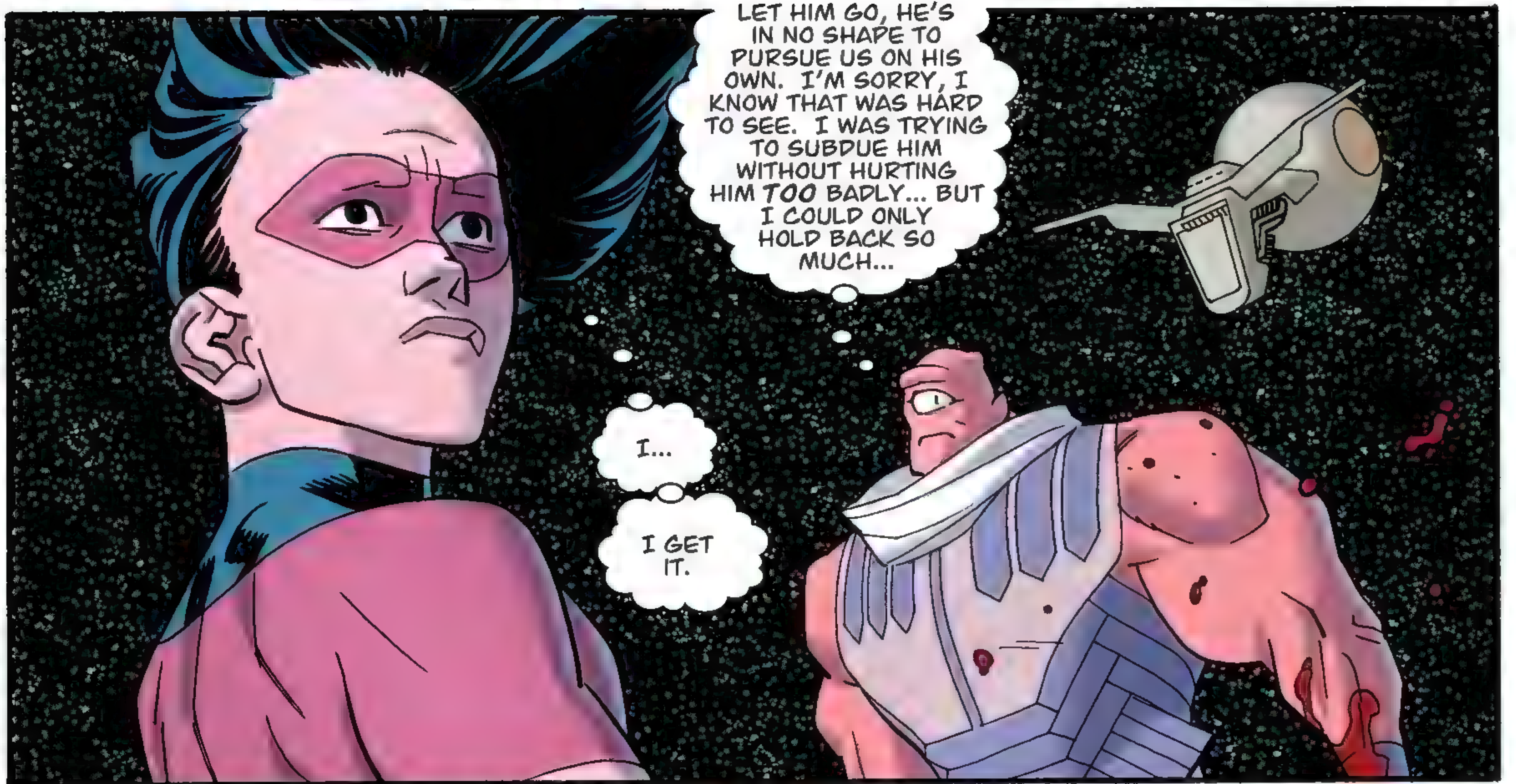
AND  
PLEASE,  
DON'T HOLD  
ALL THIS  
AGAINST--



DAMN.



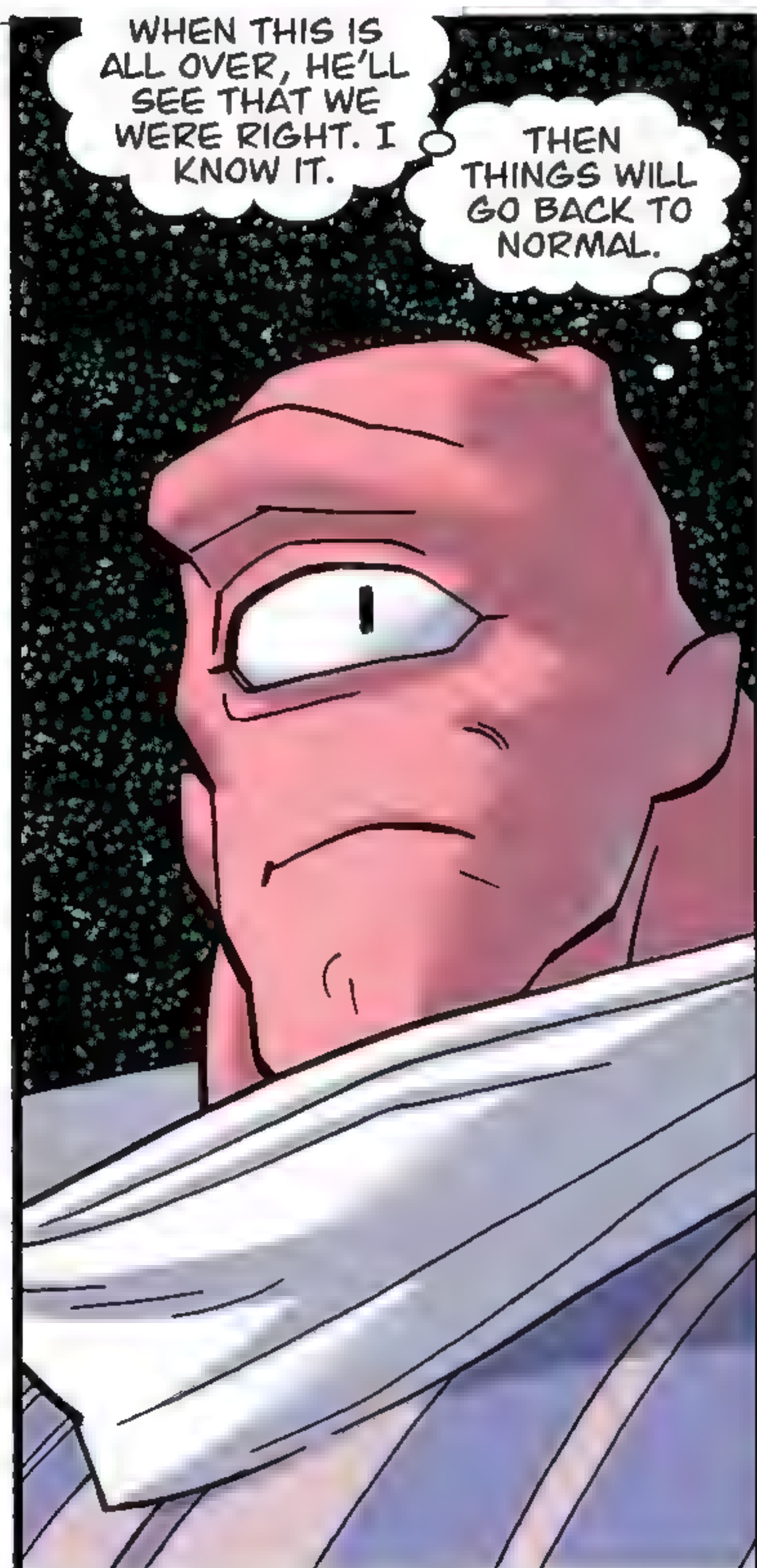




LET HIM GO, HE'S  
IN NO SHAPE TO  
PURSUE US ON HIS  
OWN. I'M SORRY, I  
KNOW THAT WAS HARD  
TO SEE. I WAS TRYING  
TO SUBDUE HIM  
WITHOUT HURTING  
HIM TOO BADLY... BUT  
I COULD ONLY  
HOLD BACK SO  
MUCH...

I...

I GET  
IT.



WHEN THIS IS  
ALL OVER, HE'LL  
SEE THAT WE  
WERE RIGHT. I  
KNOW IT.

THEN  
THINGS WILL  
GO BACK TO  
NORMAL.



I... HOPE  
YOU'RE  
RIGHT,  
ALLEN.



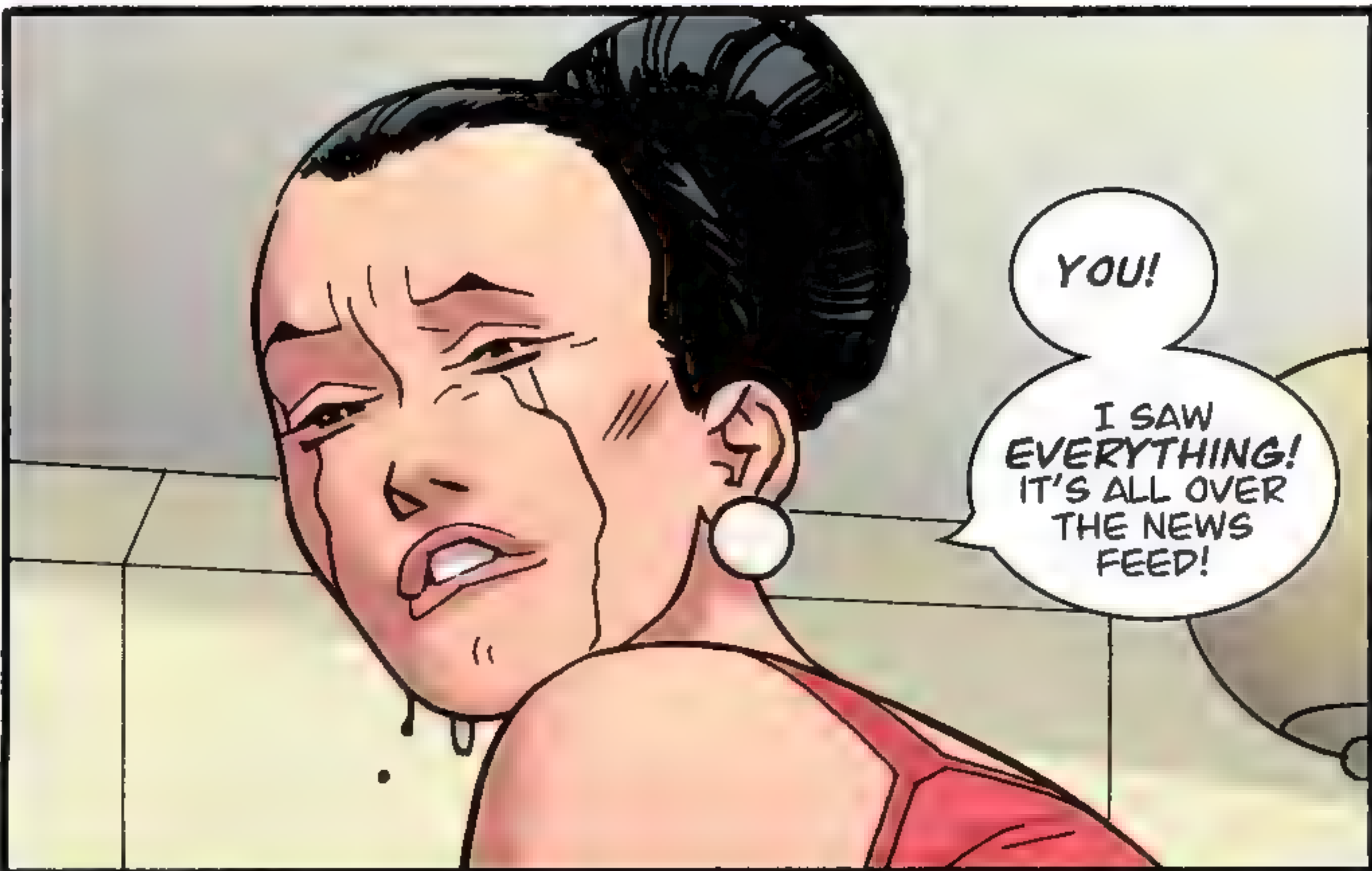
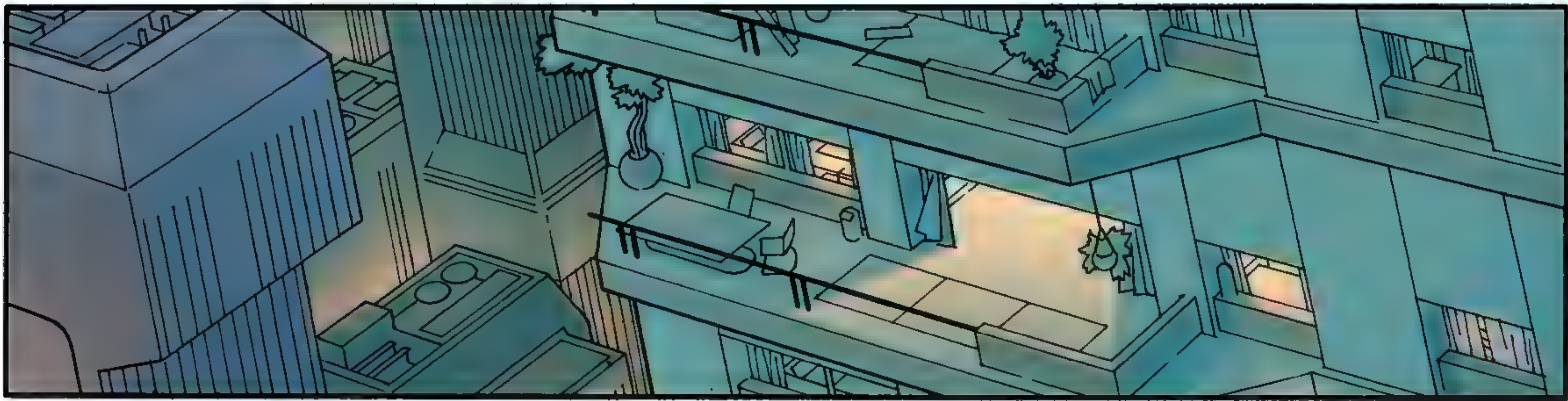
WILL YOU  
ACCOMPANY  
ME TO  
EARTH?

I COULD  
USE YOUR HELP  
EITHER CONVINCING  
MARK... OR  
MORE LIKELY,  
RESTRAINING  
HIM.



LET'S  
GO.











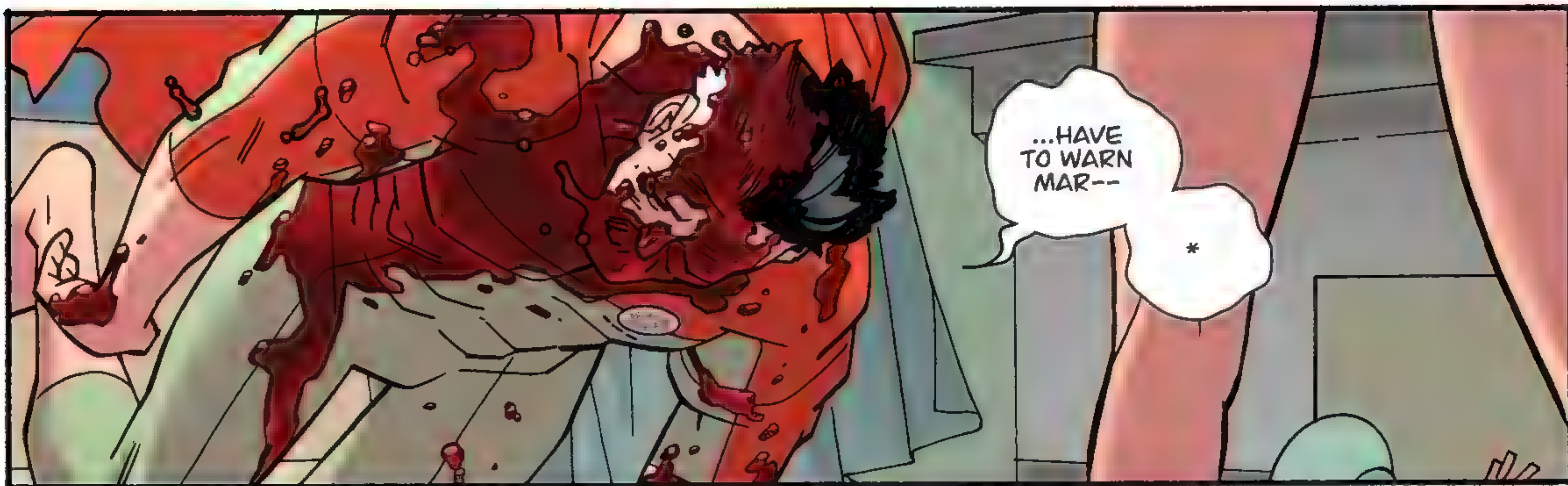


WE'VE  
GOT TO  
GET TO  
EARTH...

WE'VE  
GOT TO...

WE...







WRITE US @

INVINCIBLE@FUNKOTRON.COM



Heya Invincibles!

Your fearless Editor, Sina Grace here, happy to bring you a healthy dose of Cory Walker. Thanks dude, for stepping in and showing off your skills, while giving Ryan time to catch up. Also: big thanks to FCO Plascencia for returning to Invincible to handle coloring duties on Cory's run.

Let's dive into letters, we have some good'uns and I'm sick of talking about Cory Walker.

*Hi, kids! Robert Kirkman here. Before we dive off into letter land--I'd like to take a moment to thank FCO Plascencia for his hard work and devotion on this series over the last few years. I discovered FCO on Jay Faerber and Jon Sommariva's excellent Image Comic GEMINI, which was a great book (like most every comic written by Jay Faerber). The art really stood out to me. Jon is a great artist with a really unique style and the coloring... that really blew me away.*

*I immediately contacted Jay to get the contact info for this FCO Plascencia character. At the time, we were doing a BRIT regular monthly series (that's available in trade, please buy it) and I needed a colorist to come onto issue 7 and color Nate Bellegarde. Nate is very picky, and rightly so, but I knew FCO had a style that would really elevate his work, and the two worked REALLY well together. Their work is contained in BRIT, Volume 3: FUBAR if you want to check it out. (Pssst, you want to check it out).*

*The work was so good, when Bill Crabtree, our esteemed original colorist decided to step down... FCO was my first choice to come in and take over this book. Ryan was blown away by what he was doing on BRIT and we were both thrilled to have FCO on board.*

*Colorists are an integral part of any creative team. An artist's work can look completely different depending on how it's colored. I have to say that I feel like Ryan's work really shined while it was colored by FCO. He really took the time to make this book look like a million bucks and I really appreciate all his hard work on the series.*

*I'm sorry to see him go, but he's having a blast on Batman, Spawn and Haunt. FCO wants to pursue other things and I know I speak for everyone involved in this series when I say I wish him great success in his new efforts. I'll be buying everything with his name on it and I suggest you give it a shot as well.*

*As sad as I am sad to see FCO go, he did a bang up job on Cory's two issues after all, I'm REALLY excited that John Rauch, who's been rocking and rolling on the book since issue 82 will be returning next month as our regular monthly colorist. Welcome aboard, John!*

*Don't screw it up!*

*After all that, I feel like I should write a similarly gushy bit about your friend and mine Cory Walker, but the good news is, Cory's not going anywhere and we'll be seeing him in these pages again before you know it. So screw you, Cory!*

*Let's answer that mail now, shall we?*

Invincible Crew-

I have been a long time reader, but after reading Invincible #84 I felt I owed it to you guys to finally write in. This is the only book I pick up every month (?) that never disappoints me. So many other books from big name publishers have so much build up and hype, and then constantly fail to deliver. This is never the case with Invincible. Whether it is killing Angstrom Levy, the fallout from the Viltrumite War, Eve getting an abortion, or even Eve putting on a few pounds, the big surprises are actually always surprises.

That's probably why we made it on MTV Geek's Best Ongoing Series list of 2011!

A friend of mine handed me the first trade and I immediately loved it so started collecting issues around #60. I wanted everything up to what I had collected in trades but did not have the money. At NYCC I was talking to one of the people at the Image booth about the Invincible Compendium (which is awesome, wish I knew about it sooner). Me and the gentleman from the Image booth were trying to explain to somebody what Invincible was about and neither of us wanted to simply say "Oh, it's a teenage superhero with superman like strength" because it is so much more than that and anyone who reads it knows it. That is exactly what is great about Invincible, it IS so much more than a superhero comic book, and it breaks boundaries and carves new paths in the comics industry every issue. It is the only book I am truly excited for.

Phew, just had to get that out. Keep up the great work guys.

Much love, Mark Covello

Starting off positive. Thanks, Mark! I wonder who it was who spoke to you?

*Positive remarks about the book?! BORING!*

Hello again, Invinci-Crew!

So after a long day of deep thought, Mark went home and caught himself a zombie flick, which was promptly turned off to discuss things with Eve. What I want to know is what movie would you suppose he was watching? Also, what are Mark and Eve's favourite movies, respectively?

Sincerely,  
Ryu @ SciFi in NC

Eve loves Troop Beverly Hills. This I know to be true.

*Karate Dog, maybe?*

*Mark was watching Survival of the Dead... he's a hardcore Romero nut!*

Hello Kirkman and Invincible crew!

Just to get my introduction out of the way, Invincible is the second comic title I've ever written to (the first was Savage Dragon and that was a couple of years ago). I have been reading Invincible monthly since about issue 48 with no plans to stop. Ever!... I hope for this letter to consist of equal parts praise as well as minor critique. ...so now, onto the two items I'd like to address.

#1. In the early issues of Invincible, one thing that kept me excited to keep reading and get the newest issue was your almost relentless sense of introducing so many new characters(both heroes and villains) from issue to issue. However, after reading the last dozen issues or so and very specifically the last four issues(which of course were all epic and awesome!), I would just like to be re-assured that invincible will not fall into the rouges-gallery-trappings that a lot of super hero comics concede to. Now, it is great to re-visit characters from the past and I know that is very important for character and plot development, but personally I've found that the magic of frequently meeting brand new characters from issue to issue has dwindled some. I anxiously await some new and crazy and fun and insanely original and humorous and serious and lighthearted and emotional and etc., etc.,etc. type of characters from the mind of Robert Kirkman! I would greatly appreciate any your thoughts about my thoughts on this subject.

Isn't part of the fun with new characters that you get to actually watch them grow and develop a little bit? Robert's been introducing a lot of characters, and setting them up in the right places for some major upcoming events... I feel like some of the impact would be lost if it was a new guy who destroyed Las Vegas, and is now teaming up with Mark for Things to Come.

*If anything... MAYBE we put the new characters in Guarding the Globe instead of this series while Mark was in space during the Viltrumite war... but we've been introducing new characters. What about that alien criminal last issue? Huh? What about Gravitator? I still consider Dinosaurus, Universa and Powerplex to be somewhat new. There will always be new characters popping up--but we do have to do things with all the characters we've already introduced from time to time.*

#2. If there has to be an alternative colorist to FCO Plascencia, please oh please oh please let it be John Rauch! Nothing against Nikos Koutsis as I love his work on Savage Dragon, but I found that it did not fit the art style of Invincible nearly as well. John Rauch's colors on the other hand...WOW! They give such a natural and unifying tone to the pencils and inking of Ottley and Rathburn. Issues 82 and 83 just have an absolutely classy look and feel. So, any plans to land a new long term colorist? John Rauch gets my vote. A rotating team of colorists might be necessary sometimes and can keep things interesting, but I was just curious about the future plans of the colors on the book.

John has been a fun addition to the team, and it looks like he's along for the ride! I'm sure he's glad to hear you like his work!

*Let's not let John get a big head just yet... Bill and FCO both colored nearly fifty issues of the series. Let's let him get some full TPBs under his belt, first!*

Thanks!  
Jeff Waesch  
Tulsa, OK

P.S./item #3. Its always a treat to see you on the iFanboy video show!

They're good guys, and bring out the best in Robert.

*Actually, I feel compelled to point out that I'm really the sole contributor to the entertainment value of those iFanboy interviews. Those guys are boring as hell... it's all me... point the glory this-a-way. (Does saying "this-a-way" make it clear that I'm joking?)*

Hi

I was just writing this because I just finished reading issue #84 and there were complaints on how Universa's name was used, or not used. I for one completely agree with Mr. Kirkman's approach as opposed to how Marvel and DC do it where every single time a character pops up, they have to tell me their life story. Frankly I feel just like Dinosaurus was when Invincible told him his life story. Except, you know, I don't turn into some sort of monster and stuff.

Or did you!?

Where are the Viltrumites?!? I know it's kind of late but when I was reading the Viltrumite War story arc and I saw someone with a hearty mustache I would immediately think of them as Viltrumites. And my dad has a hearty mustache. . . .

So yeah, keep on keeping on.

Juan Ontiveros



**First things first: your dad IS a Viltrumite. Why your powers haven't kicked in is beyond me.**

**Second things second: this current arc is all about the imminent death to all Viltrumites on Earth. So we'll be dealing with them even if we're not actually SEEING them.**

***Don't plan on seeing those guys any time soon. They're in hiding on Earth. We'll see them eventually, but let's let some time pass, okay?***

-----

Mr. Kirkman and Mr. Grace

First off, great issue and great series. I used Invincible and TWD as a gateway drug to get one of my friends into comics and it worked wonderfully. Of course after going to our local comic shop today, :cough: Legendary Comics in Stillwater, Ok :cough: he ask me if "This Kirkman guy just puts out books whenever he feels like it?" But I can't complain about the quality of your books.

**Sigh... blame the editor. The Viltrumite War was quite taxing on us schedule-wise, but we've been trying to expedite our shipping us much as possible without offending retailers to get completely caught up. We should be back to our solicited dates by February/ March.**

***Or else!***

Onto this issue. I am glad to see Chris getting some page time. He is an interesting character and a walking, talking good deed for Mark. Invincible is going to need all the good will he can get now that he has teamed up with Dinosaurus. Anyways, Numbered Questions!

1 Is the future where Mark takes over the world and then leaves The Immortal/Abraham Lincoln in charge still viable or have we avoided that timeline?

**There's a possibility...**

**More than that, go back and read that issue again in a few months... there's a LOT of hints as to what will be happening in the book eventually in that story. None of that Immortal dialogue is just throwaway stuff I never plan on getting to.**

2 What happened with those two guys with the time scooter, or whatever it was?

**They're in New York, editing books for Mark Millar. Inside jokes! Robert?**

***GOOD ONE. They're heading up an Eddie Vedder cover band?***

***Their world was saved... we may never see them again! But... did they keep the declaration of independence after they stole it?! We'll never know!***

3 Are the time scooter Kung Fu brothers going to show up now that Invincible is going dark? In my head they know Kung Fu. I don't know if that was really in the book.

**Mark is going #dark? I don't think they know any martial arts whatsoever.**

4 I like the two page spread of Invincible's head in this issue. My compliments to the art team, but story-wise it kinda sucked. A whole page for one word kinda feels cheap. That was more of a statement then a question.

**You'll always be wrong on this one: Robert stands behind his double page head spreads. As do I. If I could, I would have a double page spread photo of me saying just that.**

***Well, I will admit that I have been doing them a bit, too often (look back a page or so in the story, heh?). But I DO love them! They're great for giving a moment impact. In the case of issue 84... that's a HUGE moment for Mark, realizing that Dinosaurus could be right. I thought it merited a big ol' spread.***

5 If Mark is paralleling Cecil's story arc with the whole using villains to do good thing does that mean Invincible will become the new head of the Global Defense Agency?

**Not a terrible thought, but not the right one.**

6 Will Mark use his new position as head of the Global Defense Agency as a staging point to take over the world with his friend Dinosaurus?

**Hmm, well when you put it that way...**

It all makes sense you evil genius!  
James Kephart II

**Yes, Robert does have evil genius leanings...**

***Shhhhhh.***

-----

Dear Invinci-Crew,

OMG.....issue 84 was awesome and fun. Let me give some praise to the art team, you guys rock. I appreciate the hard you all put in each issue at the tender price of \$2.99. I'm a guy who craves superhero action in my comics Invincible has definitely challenged me as a reader and I thank you all for that. The characterization depicted in each panel is beautifully crafted....you're the man Ryan!

Let me not forget to give kudos to Mr. Rauch for your organic color work. If you don't mind me asking but which program do you use to color? I ask because each panel breathes in its own way....again great work John!

**Photoshop!**

Hey Cliff, I don't know you've been drinking but I definitely want some....lol. Your ink work comes off as if it's easy but when I look closely, I'm at awe of the finesse in the line work. Which brushes do you use?

**Black ones!**

Now for you Robert....how do you do it man? The fun I'm having whenever reading this book is unmatched! I love the twists and turns going on in Mark's life. I'm always theorizing where the series is going but you never fail to surprise me. YOU GUYS ARE F\*\*\*\*\* killing this title for a tender price of \$2.99!!! My fiance and I have always thought about collecting the read in Trade PB but I give in each and every time (lol)

when I see the title staring back at me at my Comic book shop. Thank you all for another great issue but before I go Robert I've got to ask you another question.....will we ever see a resurrection of the original Rex Splode? I miss him (with one tear leaving my right eye).

**I don't know how Robert does it, but I can say that "It" does not include bringing Rex Splode back any time soon. Some deaths you have to honor.**

***Right! If we brought back Rex, this book would be as crappy as those OTHER super hero comics where death has no meaning.***

**#BigTwoRrrrips**

Before I forget, Sina and Rus....you two rock at enforcing the easy to read fluidity of this title!!!!

**INVINCIBLE IS THE BEST SUPERHERO COMIC BOOK IN THE UNIVERSE.....PERIOD.**

-Tu-Kwon

**That may be the best letter I've ever received in my time working on these letters columns.**

***Eh... I've read better. Not enough negativity.***

-----

Penvincipals,

Up until issue 84, I wasn't sold on John Rauch. His colors seemed too soft somehow, if that makes sense. I wasn't really liking the way he did lighting or blending either; it seemed like it lacked gradation. I'm totally sold now though. Mr. Rauch, you absolutely killed on Invincible #84! The two page spread of Invincible's face when he decides, "Dinosaurus was right," is absolutely stunning. I love FCO Plascencia, but I feel like, at the very least, this particular issue could not possibly have been done better by anyone other than Rauch.

**Aww, are you blushing, John Rauch?**

Now that I've got my praise for the coloring out of the way, I should mention that I'm really excited about the direction the story is taking. I feel like Invincible parallels The Walking Dead in that it pushes the limits of its genre by really following character development all the way through. In The Walking Dead, Rick and his band of survivors have basically worked through all the basic zombie apocalypse stuff and are really getting into what would happen next--rebuilding civilization. Invincible now seems to be moving past the basic superhero stuff into an exploration of the impact someone like Mark Grayson could have on the world. I can't wait to see wait to see where this story goes next, because unlike any other superhero book, I can't be too sure what's going to happen next.

Joseph Gray

**You shan't be disappointed! Unless we lose John and hire a digital painter to do the book, then you might feel a bit weird.**

***Hmmmm.***

-----

Gentlemen,

Good to see you picking up the pace again with issue #84. I was feeling a little bored with the lull post Viltrumite War. I didn't expect the Dinosaurus team-up. Interesting direction to go in. I was sure Mark was going to hang it up the way things were going.

Questions:

1. Can we see what's up with the Viltrumites yet? Obviously you must have some cool stuff planned for them. Just don't make us wait too long!

**Patience!**

***Yeah... be REEEEEAAAALLLLL patient.***

2. Is Robot a clone? I don't recall and this thing where he's turning into Rex-Splode has me confused.

**He was a little troll who transferred his consciousness in a Rex Clone body. He went by Rudy and then changed it to Rex after our hero died.**

***Yeah, I ran through the whole series of events in a previous issue's letters column... go check it out. Sina, what letters column was that?***

**It was last issue!**

3. Is Nolan the only Viltrumite with half-breed kids? There's potential for some badass villains if not.

**I'll never tell.**

**Just got Ryan's groovy art book in the mail this morning. Great stuff.**

**Super great.**

Kevin

PS: Any progress on the ebook text justification thing?

**We're still working with comixology to get that fixed!**

-----

**Okay, I'm done with Invincible—for 2011! See you all in the first week of 2012, where Ryan returns, and things heat up on Earth! Happy Holidaze,**

-Sina Grace

***And in 2012... MORE ISSUES OF INVINCIBLE! I PROMISE! We're shooting for 12 monthly issues.***

***-Robert Kirkman***



# DON'T MISS THE NEXT ISSUE!



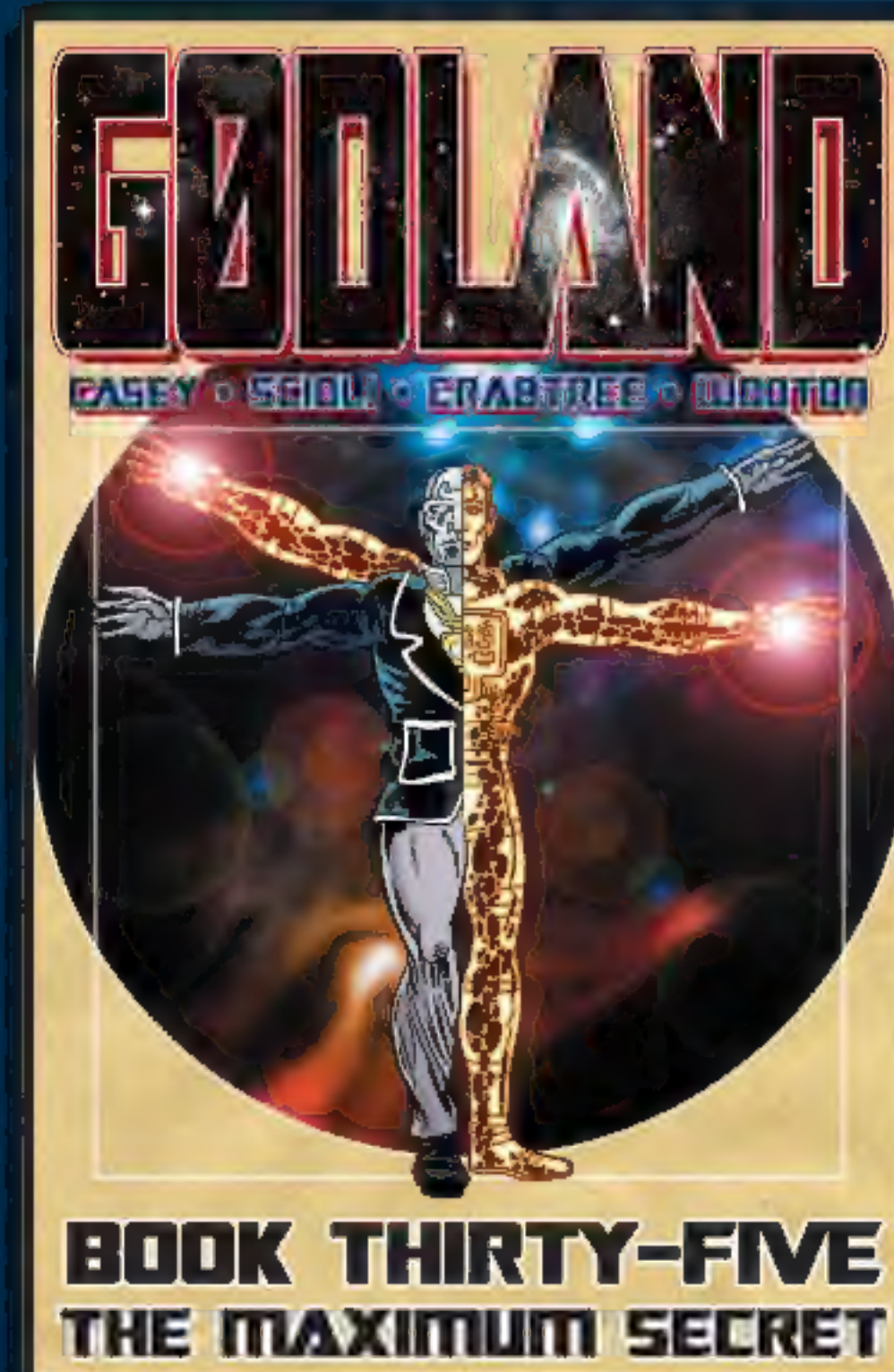
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# The Third Degree:

## RIAN HUGHES

### IMAGE COMICS' MONTHLY Q&A SESSION

Londoner Rian Hughes began his career as a designer working for Smash Hits, i-D magazine and a series of record sleeve design companies. His early comic strip work appeared in the alternative press magazine *Escape*, and this led to work for Belgian art-house publisher Magic Strip. His first mainstream UK comic work was *Dan Dare* with Grant Morrison for Fleetway's short-lived *Revolver* title, and from there he moved to 2000AD, illustrating such series as *Really and Truly*, again with Morrison, and *Robo-Hunter* with Peter Hogan. Dividing his time between illustration and design, he has provided design, custom type and illustration for advertising campaigns, CD and record sleeves, book jackets and graphic novels, and numerous comic book logos for mainstream comic publishers such as DC Comics and Marvel. Recent publications include *Cult-ure: Ideas can be Dangerous* (Fiell) and *YESTERDAY'S TOMORROWS*, a collection of his comic work which was recently launched at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, and is now available from Image.

#### What are you working on right now?

Some illustrations on a burlesque theme for an upcoming book collection; a logo for young upstart musicians The Lipstick Melodies; the cover design for the manual of correct hat-doffing and butler baiting, *The Chap* magazine; logo designs for the reboot of a well-known comics line; and a sequel to *CULTURE: Ideas can be Dangerous*.

#### What's the best part of your job?

Creating beautiful things for appreciative clients.

#### What's the worst part of your job?

Being asked to spoil those beautiful things by clients who are visually tone-deaf, who make arbitrary changes and "improvements" that simply don't work.

#### How did you first discover comics?

Through a weekly British comic called *Countdown* that featured the talents of John M. Burns, Frank Bellamy and Mike Noble.

#### If you weren't working in comics, what would you be doing?

Working at the Large Hadron Collider as a particle physicist. The Earth-2 version of me studied physics instead of going to art school. He may harness dark matter, use it to build an interdimensional portal, and visit us soon.

#### What's the strangest thing a fan has ever said to you?

I have fans? Where? Are they cute? Can you introduce me?

#### What are you most likely to complain to an editor about?

The fact that a line of type should be 12.5 on 14pt, but has somehow been changed to 12 on 14pt and the kerning has been turned off. And that, yes, it does matter. Such things are of earth-shaking importance to us type design geeks. Even comic covers need to adhere to elementary design rules - please stick to a logical grid so things line up on a page, and from page to page, and don't just randomly throw elements together; don't reverse white type on a wide line length out of a detailed image or a photoshop texture and expect our eyes not to hurt; don't use 5 different fonts in wildly differing styles and sizes on one job; adding a chrome shine in Photoshop does not make a bad logo a good logo, you're simply doing what's known in the trade as 'turd polishing'; if you're trying to evoke a period, use the correct type style - Helvetica didn't exist in 1930; those free fonts are probably free for a reason... I'm getting carried away here, aren't I? Just apply some basic design common sense. I'll get of my soapbox now.

#### Who is the biggest influence on your work?

I respond to artists and designers who show an awareness of the overall structure of a piece, and then mess with that structure in an interesting manner. Monty Python, Alan Moore and Peter Saville all take one step further back from the job at hand, address our assumptions as to what it should look like, and see the wider picture that others miss or assume is a given. From a more stylistic point of view, I admire illustrators who show a healthy appreciation of design in their work and vice-versa - Serge Clerc, The Stenberg

Brothers, Roger Excoffon, Jean Carlu, Yves Chaland, Frank Bellamy, Ashley Havinden, Ever Meulen, and more lately Ashley Wood and Shane Glines.

#### What is the single work of which you're most proud?

I hope that work is yet to come. If it isn't, I'm already past my best and sliding into late-period McCartney territory. Not a pretty thought.

#### Own up to one of your guilty pleasures.

My work is my greatest pleasure. True, and yet probably something no-one should own up to...

#### What was the last comic book you bought?

*Solipsistic Pop* 4 at the London Comiket at the weekend.

#### Who would play you in a movie about your life?

Someone far more handsome than I am in real life. A young John Foxx, perhaps.

#### Pick three things you couldn't live without.

A pocket-sprung mattress, a well-stocked library and the love of close friends and family.

#### What's the strangest thing you have in your house?

Where to start... there are nothing but strange things in my house. Random example: I somehow ended up with Black Grape's NME Award for Single of the Year; a bronze fist giving the finger. A flirty hand-written note with hearts on from Geri Halliwell, perhaps?

#### When was the last time you laughed out loud?

"Greece is halting exports of taramasalata and hoolious due to the monetary crisis. It's a double-dip recession..."

#### What music are you listening to these days?

I'm lucky enough to be working with some bands whose work I genuinely rate. The Winchell Riots. Ultravox. Here in the studio, we often have BBC Radio 6 on quietly in the background.

#### What is your favorite film of all time?

It would have to be *Blade Runner*. Rutger's finest Hauer.

#### Who is your best friend?

I'm not telling, as I don't like to play favourites. They know who they are.

#### What is the worst advice you've ever received?

I'm not a great one for taking advice, and am trying to stop myself from giving it as well. I do remember meeting illustrator Brain Grimwood early in my career; who said "Ideas never go out of style". Now that's some good advice.

#### When was the last time you were truly frightened?

On a plane flying back to London from Muscat, Oman last year. The hydraulics failed and the plane started fishtailing violently. I looked out of the window and the end of the wing was on fire. We eventually made it back to Muscat by throttling the engines and turning the plane around, but that hour or so was the longest of my life.

#### Name someone you really admire and explain why.

Rather than an individual, I'd like to salute those cartoonists and artists who don't self-censor in the face of violent intimidation by certain pre-enlightenment religious thugs. While the comics fraternity have come together to protect it's First Amendment rights before, they seem to be (with a few notable exceptions) rather quiet this time around. Why? Maybe they don't fancy getting firebombed.

#### What would you like to see happen in comics in the next 12 months?

No more crossovers, please. Stories I can pick up and understand without reading a dozen other titles first.

#### What the world needs now is...

A nice cup of tea and a neck rub.

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## Question of the Month

What's your favorite  
new trend in comics?

"The widening of readership. Ads for comics on TV and in subways. AMC shows and Apple products inviting a whole new generation of readers to comic shops."

**Nathan Edmondson**

THE ACTIVITY, WHO IS JAKE ELLIS?

"I like that a lot of young artists are both penciling and inking their own work. Sometimes coloring, too! It's not new, by any means, but it's a trend that looks to be on to be on an upswing. DIY FTW."

**Tradd Moore**

THE STRANGE TALENT OF LUTHER STRODE

"It must be VOODOO ROMANCE, spin a romance yarn, toss in a helping of creep flesh, and you've got a sure-fire hit book on your hands. Well, that's what I told Dave Hine."

**Shaky Kane**

SHAKY KANE'S MONSTER TRUCK,  
BULLETPROOF COFFIN

"I'm excited about more books being released digitally the same day as print. It's a big step in getting comics in front of as large an audience as possible."

**Ron Marz**

WITCHBLADE, SHINKU

"I don't know if I can identify a new trend, but I like the releases of old material for a new generation of readers. I just got our family some old Donald Duck books and found the classic hard cover Tin Tin volumes."

**Doug Tennapel**

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